

What is mold?

Mold is a common type of fungus that comes in different shapes, sizes and colors. It can be found almost anywhere and can grow on almost anything as long as moisture is present.

Can mold affect my health?

Mold can cause allergic reactions, such as sneezing, runny nose, red, itchy eyes and skin rashes. In serious cases, a person exposed to mold can have an asthma attack.

Allergic reactions to mold will usually disappear and not cause long-term problems if the mold is removed. Most molds do not harm healthy people, but some people may be more sensitive than others.

These sensitive people include:

- Infants
- The elderly
- People with weakened immune systems
- Pregnant women
- People with asthma and allergies

Advice for renters

Before you sign a lease, make sure your rental is a healthy place to live. Discuss possible moisture issues with the landlord first. Do not rent a home that doesn't meet your health requirements. Extra time spent on a rental walk-through inspection could save you time, money and possible health problems in the future.

What if I find mold in my rental?

Talk to your landlord first. Try to agree on what steps must be taken to fix the situation. Tenants and landlords both have the responsibility to deal with water and moisture problems that can cause mold. Generally, the landlord is responsible for fixing leaks. The renter is responsible for reducing moisture in the home.

(Idaho Codes (I.C.) Sections 6-303, 6-320, 6-321, 55-208, and 55-307 describe tenant and landlord responsibilities and relationships.)

In Idaho, there is an implied "warranty of habitability" promise in all rental contracts. This means that all landlords promise to keep rental units at the legal minimum level of health and safety.

What else can a renter do to resolve the issue?

- Take photographs or videos of the mold problem. Make sure to mark down the date and time.
- Send a signed letter to the landlord explaining what repairs are needed and ask for a written response.

For more information, see Idaho Legal Aid's *Landlord-Tenants Rights and Responsibilities and Advice for Idaho Renters-Repairs*:

www.idaholegalaid.org/node/1333/landlord-tenants-rights-responsibilities

Should my home be tested for mold?

Testing for mold is not recommended, since standards and guidelines for testing have not been determined. The time and money spent on testing should be used on the clean-up of mold.

If you can see mold or smell a musty odor, you may have a mold problem.

It doesn't matter what type of mold you might have – all molds should be treated the same when it comes to health risks and removal.

For more information

For more information on mold and other indoor air pollutants, contact the Idaho Environmental Health Education and Assessment Program toll-free at 1-800-445-8647 or e-mail:

bceh@dhw.idaho.gov

Websites about mold

- www.epa.gov/mold
- www.cdc.gov/mold
- www.buildwise.org/library/health/mold/mold-testing.pdf
- www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/



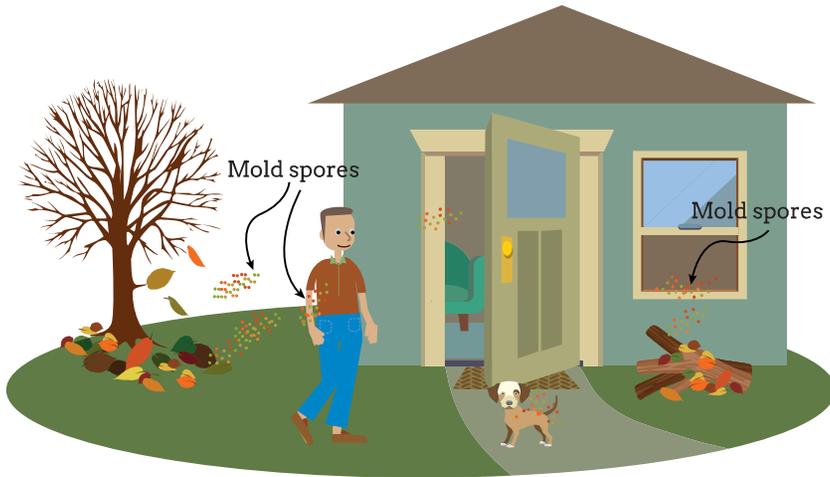
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

MOLD

- Removal
- Prevention
- Advice for Renters

How does mold get into my home?

Mold reproduces by sending out tiny spores. When these spores land on a damp surface they grow into molds. Spores can land on your skin and on your pets and be carried into your house.



How do I prevent indoor mold?

It's impossible to get rid of all mold spores indoors, but you can control mold growth by controlling moisture. Here are some tips that can help you decrease moisture and avoid mold growth in your home:

• Fix areas where you find moisture, leaks or water damage.



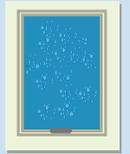
• Dry wet areas and remove wet materials right away.



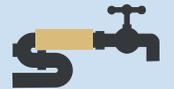
• Open a window or use a portable fan when cooking or washing dishes. Run an exhaust fan while bathing or cooking.



• Reduce humidity. Use fans, turn on the AC or heat, and open windows if you see water droplets (condensation) on the inside of windows.



• Cover cold surfaces such as cold water pipes with insulation.



• Don't paint or caulk over mold. The mold will grow under the paint.



If you don't fix a moisture problem, and dry and clean properly, the mold will return.

How do I remove mold in my home?

You should remove all indoor mold growth, no matter what type of mold it is. For mold areas of less than 3 feet by 3 feet you can clean it yourself. *If the mold area is larger than 3 feet by 3 feet, you should contact a professional.* Check under "Fire and Water Damage Restoration" in the phone book or on the Internet.



1. Shut doors and close off vents to seal off the room where the mold damage was found so others living in the home won't be exposed to mold.



2. Make sure there's good ventilation when using any cleaning products (open windows, run fans). This will also help to dry the area when you're done cleaning.



3. Before cleaning any moldy area, put on protective gear. Use a dust mask (N-95 recommended), rubber gloves and goggles without holes to protect your eyes from mold.



4. To clean the moldy area, use a detergent and water mixture. We do not recommend bleach because it can cause other health problems.

Be thorough when cleaning. You must clean and dry the area within 24 to 48 hours.



5. Throw away any materials that had visible mold growth (such as carpet and ceiling tiles). You should throw away materials even if you suspect they have mold.