

MOLD ALLERGY PREVENTION and CONTROL

There are hundreds and thousands of types of molds. All are fungi, which means they are many cell organisms that reproduce by sending tiny seeds called spores into the air. Mold and mold spores are in the environment year-round, indoors and out. Although they are more prevalent in warm, humid climates, molds exist everywhere.

Mold spores are the reproductive part of mold or fungus that actually cause allergic reactions. Molds feed off decomposing plant and animal matter and grow by producing filament-like clusters. Molds reproduce by giving off huge numbers of spores into the air, similar to plants releasing pollen. When airborne mold spores settle on organic matter, new mold clusters are grown. When mold spores are inhaled, they can trigger an allergic reaction.

Mold and mildew growth is obvious when it grows in bathrooms along tile grout in shower stalls. However, mold can also grow in the following places:

- Closets and storerooms
- Foam pillows
- Refrigerator door gaskets
- Self-defrosting refrigerator water pans
- Refrigerator cooling coils
- Under-sink cabinets
- Room air conditioner units
- Washing machines
- Dryer vents
- Garbage cans
- Basements
- Carpets
- Sheetrock and wallboard

Common symptoms of mold allergies include:

- Sneezing
- Chronic cough
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Itchy, watery and red eyes
- Skin rashes and hives
- Sinus headaches
- Reduced lung capacity and difficulty breathing

It is impossible to avoid contact with molds completely, however you may reduce your exposure by implementing some of the following guidelines:

- Use exhaust fans in bathrooms to reduce the humidity levels.
- Use a mold-killing solution (such as 1 to 10 bleach/water solution) in bathrooms and shower stalls, on bathroom tiles, shower curtains, around the bathtub and toilet tank.
- Use paint with a mold inhibitor, or add a mold inhibitor to standard paint for use in baths.
- Replace bathroom carpets with tile or linoleum.
- Use a chemical moisture remover in closets.
- Never put away wet shoes.
- Use exhaust fans in the kitchen to remove cooking steam and food vapors.
- Repair all water leaks promptly.
- Use a dehumidifier to keep the relative humidity below 40 percent to deter mold growth
- Use a simple humidity gauge to regularly measure levels in your home.
- Consider installing a high-performance electrostatic filter in your central air conditioning and heating system to trap mold spores and inhibit mold production
- Never put damp clothing in closets or drawers

The following molds listed on the next page are commonly found in this area

HORMODENDRUM	The fungus grows on organic debris in the soil and on dead leaves, it may also be found on decomposing plants, leather, rubber, cloth, paper, and wood products. Spores are released in great numbers after rains and damp weather.
ALTERNARIA	The fungus grows on organic debris in the soil and also parasitizes leaves, stems, flowers, and fruits of many vegetables, cereal grains, and ornamental plants.
PULLULARIA	It is normally found in soil, but also on decaying vegetation, plants, and caulking compounds.
FUSARIUM	It grows as a parasite on green plants such as peas, beans, cotton, tomato, corn, sweet potato, rice, vegetable and field crops, and also on decaying plants. This may be especially common in the air after a rain.
HELMINTHOSPORIUM	These spores are fairly common in the air, especially those produced by leaf parasites of grasses and cereal grains, such as corn, wheat, oat and rye.
CEPHALOSPORIUM	THIS IS NOT THE ANTIBIOTIC! This is especially common in the air after a rain. The fungus grows on organic debris in the soil.
GRAIN SMUT	It is found on vegetable and cereal crops such as corn, wheat, oat, rye, beans, etc.
GRASS SMUT	It is found on grasses and weeds.
ASPERGILLUS	It can be found growing on any substance, frequently found in damp hay, grain, and fruit. It grows on stored food products under damp conditions. One species is common on wet surfaces in bathrooms and in drip pans of refrigerators and other appliances.
PENICILLIUM	THIS IS NOT THE ANTIBIOTIC! Normally a soil inhabitant, but grows readily on food and other organic materials (citrus fruits, jams, bread, apples, leather in the home).
RHODOTORULA	This is a common species of yeast, easily identified by its orange color. It is commonly found in air and water contaminants. Also found in moist environments such as carpeting, coils and drain pans.
CANDIDA ALBICANS	It is a normal flora in our bodies and can fluctuate with what is going on in our bodies, such as being treated for an infection with antibiotics. Can cause yeast infections, thrush, lung and skin infections.
EPIDERMOPHYTON	This mold grows on our bodies and is a normal flora. It can cause athlete's foot, jock itch, and other skin problems.
TRICHOPHYTON	This mold grows on our bodies and is a normal flora. It can cause athlete's foot, jock itch, and other skin problems