

WHAT IS MOLD?



JEFF TIPTON 480-216-9966
AIMEE BURRELL 480-216-2644

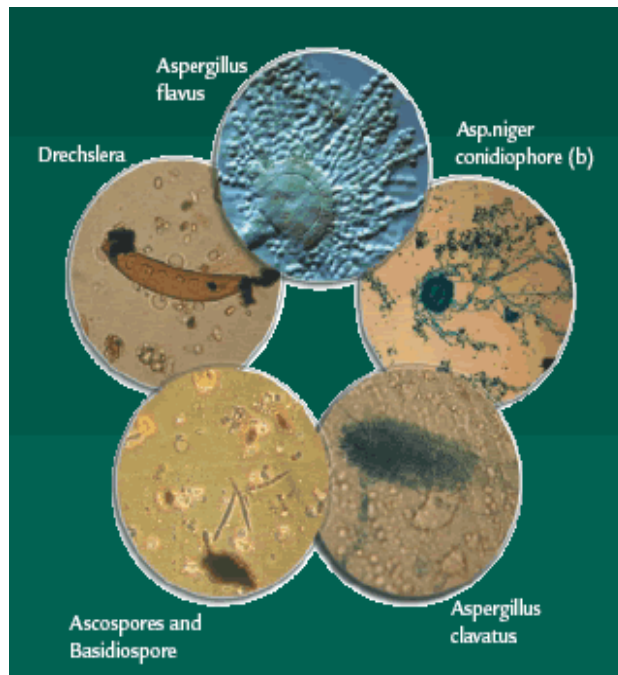
www.TheTiptonTeam.com

RE/MAX Power Realty
91 N. Val Vista Dr. #102
Gilbert, AZ 85234

What is Mold?

Molds are simple, microscopic organisms, found virtually everywhere. Molds are forms of fungi found year round both indoors and outdoors. Outdoors, molds live in the soil, on plants, and on dead or decaying matter. Molds are needed for breaking down dead material. Another common term for mold is mildew. Mold growth is encouraged by warm and humid conditions, although it can grow during cold weather. There are thousands of species of mold, and they can be any color. Mold growths can often be seen in the form of discoloration, ranging from white to orange and from green to brown and black. When molds are present in large quantities, they can cause allergic symptoms similar to those caused by plant pollen.

Many times, mold can be detected by a musty odor. Most fungi, including molds, produce microscopic cells called "spores" that spread easily through the air. Live spores act like seeds, forming new mold growths (colonies) with the right conditions. All of us are exposed to fungal spores daily in the air we breathe.



Should I Be Concerned with Mold in my Home?

Most people have no reaction when exposed to molds. Allergic reactions, similar to common pollen or animal allergies, and irritation are the most common health effects for individuals sensitive to molds. Flu-like symptoms and skin rash may occur. Molds may also aggravate asthma. In rare cases, fungal infections from building-associated molds may occur in people with serious immune disease. Most symptoms are temporary and eliminated by correcting the mold problem.

Mold can become a problem if there is moisture available to allow mold to thrive and multiply. The following are sources of indoor moisture that may cause problems:

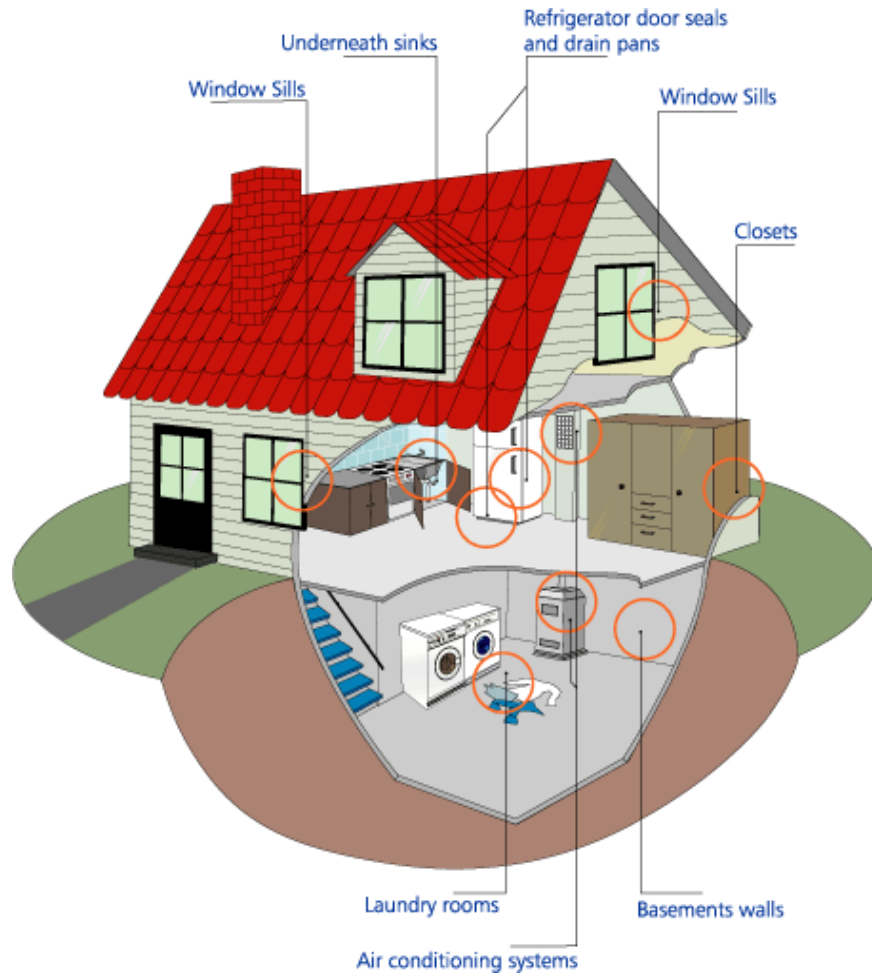
- flooding
- backed-up sewers
- leaky roofs
- humidifiers
- mud or ice dams
- damp basement or crawl spaces
- constant plumbing leaks
- house plants -- watering can generate large amounts of moisture
- steam from cooking
- shower/bath steam and leaks
- wet clothes on indoor drying lines
- clothes dryers vented indoors
- combustion appliances (e.g. stoves) not exhausted to the outdoors

CAUTION:

If you see moisture condensation on the windows or walls, it is also possible that you have a combustion problem in your home. It is important to have sufficient fresh air available for fuel burning appliances, such as the furnace, water heater, stove/range, clothes dryer, as well as a fireplace. A shortage of air for these appliances can result in *back drafting* of dangerous gases such as **carbon monoxide** into the home. To prevent back drafting of air, you need either open vents or a ventilation system that brings fresh air into the home to replace air that is exhausted out. *Have your local utility company or a professional heating contractor inspect your fuel-burning appliances annually.*



MOLD CAN BE FOUND IN MANY AREAS OF YOUR HOME



Symptoms:

- o Cough
- o Nasal and sinus congestion
- o Wheezing and breathing conditions
- o Sore throat
- o Skin and eye irritation
- o Upper respiratory infections

There is a wide variability in how people are affected by mold exposure. People who may be affected more severely and quickly than others include:

- o Infants and children
- o Elderly people
- o Pregnant women
- o Individuals with respiratory conditions, allergies or asthma
- o Persons with weakened immune systems (for example, chemotherapy patients, organ or bone marrow transplant recipients, and people with HIV infections or autoimmune diseases)

Those with special health concerns should consult their doctor if they are concerned about mold exposure. Symptoms that may seem to occur from mold exposure may be due to other causes, such as bacterial or viral infections or other allergies.

[Should I test my home for Mold?](#)

Probably not. Looking for evidence of water damage and visible mold growth should be your first step. Testing for mold is expensive, and you should have a clear reason for doing so. In addition, there are no standards for "acceptable" levels of mold in the indoor environment. When testing is done, it is usually to compare the levels and types of mold spores found inside the home with those found outdoors. If you know you have a mold problem, it is more important to spend time and resources getting rid of the mold and solving the moisture problem causing the moldy conditions.

If you are interested in testing for mold contamination there are two primary options:

- 1) Buy a home test kit, available at most home-improvement stores;
- 2) Contact an environmental specialists or industrial hygienists who can act as a consultant on indoor air quality issues.

[What about "Toxic Mold"?](#)

To date, no scientific evidence exists to positively link residential exposure to mold with specific toxic effects. The majority of human exposures to mold toxins have occurred from ingesting moldy food. Some occupations, such as farming and working in greenhouses, where high levels of mold can be encountered, present an inhalation exposure risk for workers.

[How can I tell if Mold is causing me to get sick, or some other indoor air problem?](#)

There are other indoor air contaminants that can occur in a home, causing health problems similar to mold exposure. Exposure to tobacco smoke, pet allergens, carbon monoxide from faulty furnaces and hot water heaters, and poor sanitation can all cause health problems for residents.

If you are experiencing adverse health symptoms, it is important that you see your physician for a proper evaluation and diagnosis. Your physician may refer you to a specialist, such as an allergist, for additional tests. If you seem to feel better when you are away from your home for several hours, this may be an indication that there is a contaminant in your home. If you and your physician suspect an indoor air quality issue is causing your symptoms, and you are unable to identify and cleanup the source of the contamination, call your local health department for more information or for help on where to turn next. They can either help you directly or refer you to an indoor air quality specialist.

[How do I know if I have a Mold problem?](#)

If you can see mold growth and/or smell a musty odor, you have a mold problem. However, it is recommended that you do a thorough inspection to determine the source of the mold growth.

[What do I do if I have Mold?](#)

Testing--If you can see or smell a mold problem, then testing or sampling is typically not necessary. It is more important to identify and remediate the moisture source and clean up the mold, than to spend the time and money on testing. In addition, there are no agreed upon health-based standards for human exposure to mold or mold spores. Testing is only indicated in rare instances and should be discussed with an indoor air quality specialist.

Cleanup--Small areas of mold growth on nonporous surfaces can usually be cleaned by the removal of the gross mold buildup, followed by the application of a simple bleach solution. The affected area(s) should be allowed to dry thoroughly. Extensive cleanup of large areas may require the use of a mold/water cleanup service and the removal of mold contaminated surfaces (including drywall, carpeting or wood flooring).

Seeking professional help--If you suspect you have an indoor air quality problem, contact your local health department. They may be able to do an in-home inspection, or they can refer you to an indoor air quality specialist.

[Who do I call to deal with extensive Mold growth in a building?](#)

A professional experienced in mold evaluation and remediation may need to be hired to address extensive mold growth in a building. It is important to correct large mold problems as soon as possible by first fixing the source of the moisture problem and removing contaminated materials, then cleaning the surfaces and finally drying the area completely. If you use outside contractors or professionals, make sure they have experience cleaning up mold. Check their references.

[Landlord/Tenant Concerns](#)

Excessive moisture in a dwelling can contribute to discomfort and aggravate respiratory conditions such as asthma. When moisture problems occur in rental properties, conflicts may sometimes occur when trying to correct them. You should always give your landlord the opportunity to correct building defects and should immediately notify your landlord when you notice moisture problems. Alternatively, as a tenant, you have the responsibility to immediately repair moisture problems for which you are responsible.

Prior to entering into a lease: Carefully inspect the apartment for evidence of moisture problems such as stained carpeting, water stains on walls or ceilings. Pay close attention to plumbing locations. Take note of musty odors. If you or other residents have asthma or other respiratory conditions, you may wish to avoid units with evidence of water damage, older carpeting, smoking and slab-on-grade or below-grade units which may have higher relative humidities.

Resolving conflict: While dampness and mold are typically not written into local housing ordinances, landlords do have a duty to keep premises in a reasonable state of repair and to make necessary structural repairs. Tenants have certain rights where conditions in the premise materially affect health or safety of the tenant.

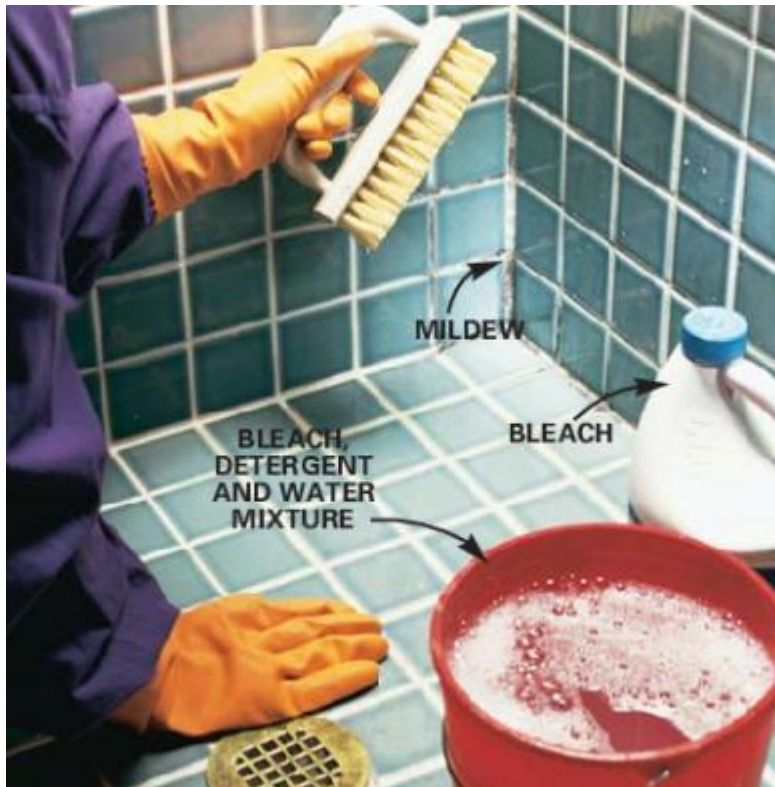
In resolving conflict, you should always first contact your landlord and describe the condition you are concerned about.

Managing Mold

Manage moisture and allergens:

1. Maintain humidity below 50 percent. Using air conditioning or a dehumidifier will help.
2. Manage insects which can be a significant source of allergens. Vacuum frequently; preferably with a HEPA vacuum (a HEPA vacuum has a filter capable of removing particles as small as 0.3 microns at 99.97 percent efficiency). Refer to mold guidance if you have moisture damage or encounter mold, by clicking on the links above.

Contact your local health department and/or housing/building inspector and describe the mold and/or moisture condition you are concerned about. Either authority may be able to help confirm the problem and recommend an appropriate remedy.



References and Information Links

1. National Center for Environmental Health

<http://www.cdc.gov>

2. American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology/National Allergy Bureau

<http://www.aaaai.org/nab>

3. US Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov>



DISCLAIMER: Information gained in this informative packet is reliable but not guaranteed. Clients are encouraged to independently seek information for themselves. Remax Power Realty, Tipton & Burrell PLLC, Burrell Properties LLC, Jeff Tipton P.C., Aimee Burrell P.C., Tiana Tipton, affiliates, contractors, successors and assigns of each are not liable for misinformation arising out of use or related to the use of this informative packet or websites linked to it. This packet may contain typographical errors, inaccuracies, and omissions. The information in this packet is as is, it may not be complete or current and we reserve the right to amend errors, inaccuracies or omissions at any time.