

Home

H O W T O P R E V E N T M O L D I N Y O U R H O M E

Much has been written recently about mold and the damage it causes to homes and inhabitants. Some media reports have called it “toxic mold,” kindling a frenzy of concern among consumers.

M O L D A N D H E A L T H R I S K S

In rare cases, mold can be toxic. But typically, mold is an allergen and irritant. The dosage is what makes it toxic. Even table salt is toxic in high enough levels.

Currently, there aren’t widely recognized medical standards that define “safe” and “unsafe” levels of mold. Nor is there any evidence that mold is more toxic now than at any time in history. What *is* known is that mold can damage your home – and mold growth can be prevented. It’s a maintenance issue stemming from excess moisture.

W H E R E D O E S M O L D C O M E F R O M ?

Mold spores are microscopic living organisms that live virtually everywhere in our environment. They depend on moisture to survive. Some mold is actually critical to the ecosystem, while other mold is harmful to health and property.

We didn’t hear much about mold problems 20 years ago. Back then, homes weren’t built as “tight” to maintain energy efficiency, and unwanted moisture had more of a chance to escape through the attic and walls.

C O N T R O L L I N G M O L D

Mold growth can be prevented or controlled if you stop water leaks immediately and eliminate dampness and humidity within 48 hours. The Environmental Protection Agency names *moisture* control as the key to *mold* control. Follow these tips:

- The moment you notice a water problem (like a leaky water heater or a drip under the sink), mop up the water and repair the leak immediately.
- Check your roof for damage after a windstorm. Missing tiles or shakes can let water in.
- Never block the foundation vents under your home.
- Don’t allow attic insulation to plug eave and roof vents.
- Aim gutters and downspouts away from your home.
- Keep shower enclosures well caulked and tile grout thoroughly sealed.

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- Make sure range hoods, dryers, and bathroom exhaust fans vent outside (not in your attic or garage).
- Turn on your stove's exhaust fan when cooking or canning. Run the bathroom fan or crack a window when you shower.
- Replace washing machine hoses every five years to reduce the chance they'll leak or break. Do the same for dishwasher hoses and ice cube-maker connections.

