

## Carpet & Drywall

When porous items like carpet, foam carpet padding, sheetrock, upholstered furniture, leather, textiles or paper goods get wet, they should be dried within 48 hours or discarded. These soft, porous materials retain moisture for long periods of time and may even be a food source for mold growth. If sewage water is involved the materials should be discarded.

## Prevention Measures

Places that are often damp can be hard to maintain, like windows and showers. If mold in these areas seems to reappear, increasing ventilation by running a bathroom fan or opening a window and cleaning more frequently will usually prevent mold from reoccurring, or at least keep the mold to a minimum.



## Resources

**Environmental Protection Agency:**

<http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html>

**Wisconsin Department of Health:**

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/mold/>

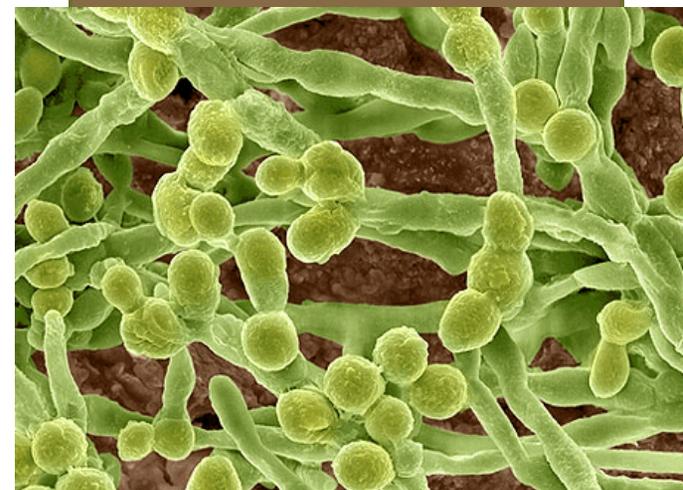
Scan this code with your smart phone to direct you to the Wisconsin Department of Health website on mold



Dunn County Health Department

800 Wilson Ave  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
715-232-2388

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# MOLD

## Frequently Asked Questions

Environmental Health

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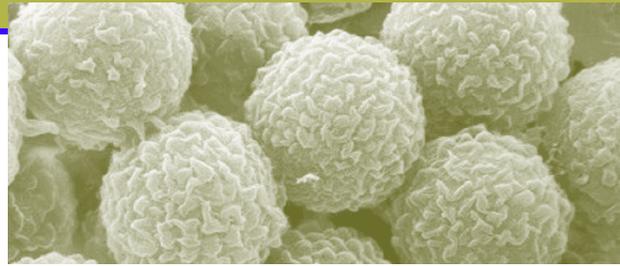


## How Do I Test For Mold?

Testing for mold is not necessary. If you can see it and smell it, you have it. Although there are tests for mold, there are many molds common in both indoor and outdoor environments. The concern comes when an environment exists that allows for the growth and proliferation of mold to an extent that it can affect those who are sensitive or allergic to it.

## What Is Toxic Black Mold?

The term "toxic mold" is misleading. Molds may produce substances called mycotoxins that modify their environment. Some of these substances are useful as antibiotics; but others are potentially harmful, especially if eaten. However, unless you are allergic to mold, there is little evidence that breathing mycotoxins in mold-contaminated buildings represents a health hazard.



## How Can Mold Affect Me?

Health effects associated with airborne mold exposure are: allergic reactions, eye and respiratory irritation, infection and toxicity. About 10% of the population is allergic to one or more types of indoor or outdoor molds.

There is not sufficient evidence to link health effects to indoor exposure to airborne mold, although ingestion of moldy food with mycotoxins has resulted in illness.

Respiratory mold infection can occur, but is rare. Occurrence is limited almost exclusively to immune-compromised patients, including those with transplants, chemotherapy, AIDS, neonates, etc.

A person with asthma who is sensitive to molds could have an asthma attack triggered by either indoor or outdoor exposures. Outdoor molds are generally more important. A physician should be consulted if mold exposure may be a concern. For people with asthma, a common health strategy is to avoid exposure by minimizing the amount of dust and humidity in the home.

## What If I Have Mold?

Small amounts of mold growing on visible non-porous surfaces up to 10 square feet can usually be easily cleaned by homeowners. Treat the area by wiping it with a cloth soaked in a mixture of 1 part chlorine bleach to 10 parts water. This will effectively kill the mold although black staining may remain.

Just as important is determining the cause of the mold growth. In order for mold to grow there must be some underlying source of moisture. If there is structural damage that is allowing moisture to return to the area, it will continue to grow mold. Sometimes high humidity and low air circulation to the area is enough to cause mold growth. In this case a dehumidifier and rearrangement of furniture or storage to make sure the area has adequate air circulation may be enough to prevent reoccurrence of the problem. Do not use a fan to dry the area until it has been thoroughly cleaned to prevent circulating mold spores throughout the dwelling.

Structural causes may include leaks in roofing, siding, or window areas and may require more extensive repairs.

If you have an extensive area of mold it may be wise to hire a contractor or professional cleaning service that has experience is mold remediation. If there are people occupying the dwelling who may be sensitive to mold, like infants, elderly, the immune suppressed, and those with medically confirmed symptoms related to mold exposure, they should evacuate the area until mold remediation is complete.