

# BREAKING THE MOLD!

## What Exactly Is Mold?

Most people think that mold is slimy, green discoloration found on carpeting, baseboards or even wallpaper that gradually increases in size, but found only in dirty, unkempt homes or apartments. In fact, mold and spores can flourish in sparkling clean environments as well.

Molds are very simple organisms that reproduce by spores, which are extremely durable. They secrete digestive enzymes that break down the surface on which they live, which makes it easier to absorb nutrition. Some molds can cause disease and are very toxic, yet not all molds are harmful.

Mold, whether toxic or mildly allergenic, can be harmful and affects almost all of us in one-way or another. Mold can be present in any room, nook or cranny, and needs to be treated as soon as it's discovered.

There is no escaping it. Whether your house was inspected for mold before you recently moved in, or had an inspection less than one year ago, you should be aware that mold can begin at anytime and anywhere, no matter how clean you keep your casa. If you haven't had an inspection within the last 18 months, now might be the perfect time to have a professional mold inspection even if there are no visible signs.

Every day we seem to learn more about mold and its health ramifications. There are approximately 40 known variations of mold, and they cause a myriad of health risks, such as: allergy attacks, arthritic aching, asthma, bloody nose, bronchitis, coughing, chronic head-aches, depression, dizziness, fatigue, hearing, loss of memory, nausea, pneumonia, restlessness, runny nose, sight, sinus congestion, skin itch, skin rashes, sneezing, trouble breathing, watery eyes, stiffness, balance or equilibrium loss.

## Phew!

The presence of mold, water seepage or smelly, musty odors should be addressed immediately. In all instances, the source(s) of moisture must be stopped somehow and the extent of water damage evaluated by a specialist. Water damaged materials should be professionally dried and repaired. Mold is a structural and environmental problem, and some mold defects aren't visible to the untrained eye, but can be detected through professional inspection.

There are many remedies to stop mold in its tracks or remove it altogether. But be warned; for best results, a professional mold expert should be hired to remove the bacteria and, as most reliable companies do, offer some sort of guarantee.

Molds are tiny microscopic organisms, and are found virtually everywhere, indoors and out. Molds can be found on outdoor plants, food, dry leaves, and other organic material. Mold spores detach very easily from their "mother ship," and become airborne quite easily, most often during simple household chores like dusting, or by merely walking across a carpet. Mold grows in air conditioning ducts, carpets, pots of houseplants, etc., you name it, mold is found almost everywhere we work and live.

## Where To Look For Mold

- Cracks in bath tiles, chipped caulking, loose toilet seals, leaks under sinks
- Carpet and padding (especially when installed over a concrete slab)
- Poorly maintained or dirty air conditioning/heating vents and filters
- Humid, damp basement or crawl space
- Seeping water stains on ceiling from broken roof tiles, or on floor leaving dark spots on walls

