



MOLD

Kern County Environmental Health Services is committed to improving the quality of life by safeguarding our community. We take pride in our customer service and our ability to understand and meet your needs.

Basic Mold Questions

What is mold?

Mold, mushrooms, and yeast are all types of fungi. Mold breaks down dead material and recycles the nutrients into the environment. There are hundreds of different kinds of molds that are commonly found in the United States and Kern County. Mold needs food and water, just like any other living thing, and it can grow almost any place that has moisture. Mold grows faster in places with high humidity. Mold can feed on paper, fabric, wallpaper glue, sheetrock, wood, soap scum, leather, and many other surfaces. In the home, mold usually grows in damp places, such as bathrooms.

How do I know if I have mold in my home?

Mold comes in many different colors. It may look furry, slimy, or powdery. Discolored patches or cottony or speckled growth on walls or furniture can indicate mold growth. Sometimes mold takes on a musty, stale, or earthy odor.

How are people exposed to mold?

People are exposed to mold both indoors and outdoors everyday. You can breathe in mold particles if mold is disturbed or damaged. You can also breathe in tiny spores (similar to seeds) that mold may release into the air. Touching mold can get it on your skin, and you can swallow mold if you eat mold or spoiled food.

What are the health effects of mold?

Some people are allergic to molds, and exposure can cause or worsen asthma symptoms, fever, or other allergies. Symptoms include coughing, congestion, runny nose, and trouble breathing. If you or your children have symptoms related to mold exposure, see a doctor. Keep in mind that symptoms related to mold exposure are also caused by many other illnesses, and usually disappear after the contamination is removed. I

How do I prevent mold growth in my home?

The best way to prevent mold growth is to remove water and moisture sources. Fixing leaks, drying damp areas, and removing humidity from the air will help stop mold growth and keep it from coming back.

Can I safely remove mold in my home?

If done correctly, mold can be safely removed from the home. Mold can cause cosmetic damage, and it may not be possible to restore original appearance.

Frequently Asked Questions

There is mold growing in all of my window seals and on my walls, what do I do?

Mold likes damp, humid places. Using a dehumidifier in damp areas of a home will help stop mold growth and keep it from coming back. In bathrooms that do not have a vent, cracking a window or door will work in the same fashion. You may need to fix leaky window seals, or other possible sources of leaks if mold continues to return after

There is not an exhaust vent in my bathroom, and I open the window when I take a shower, but the walls still get very wet and grow mold. How can I fix this?

Using a dehumidifier and keeping damp areas dry will help stop mold growth and help keep it from coming back. Make sure that you properly clean affected mold areas. Use a towel to keep walls dry after using the shower. If mold returns quickly or spreads there may be an underlying problem such as a water leak.

I have cleaned up the mold, but it keeps coming back, what do I do?

Make sure you are using the correct cleaning methods. If the mold returns quickly or spreads, there may be an underlying water leak. The best way to keep mold from coming back is to fix leaks and keep damp areas dry, such as using a towel to dry off walls or a dehumidifier. Locate and repair any water leaks and accumulations found in your home.

What obligation does the property owner have to a rented residence?

Property owners have an obligation to keep a rented residence in good condition so mold will not grow and present a safe living condition. That means repairing water leaks and significant moisture accumulation. If you have a significant amount of mold or it keeps coming back after you have cleaned it, it could be an indication of a larger issue such as a water leak or moisture accumulation.

Who do I contact about mold in a rented residence?

If you find mold in a rented residence, take the proper steps to clean and prevent future mold exposure. Follow the appropriate cleaning guidelines, and continue to maintain the affected area by keeping it dry and monitor for leaks. If the mold returns quickly or spreads, contact the property owner to inform them of the mold and a possible leak. If further assistance is required, contact your local code enforcement agency.

My landlord will not do anything to get rid of the mold and keeps painting over it, but the mold keeps growing through the paint, what do I do?

Make sure mold is cleaned properly. Surfaces should be dry and clean before being painted. If the mold returns quickly or spreads, there may be an underlying water leak or water accumulation. It is the property owner's responsibility to fix and maintain leaks to prevent mold. Contact your local code compliance office if there is water accumulation or leaks which have not been addressed. If a leak has been ruled out, maintain damp areas by keeping them clean and dry.

A final thought on mold

Most mold problems can be resolved before they start by following through on simple home maintenance projects. Whenever water or damp conditions are discovered, immediately determine the source of the moisture and fix the problem as quickly as possible. By ignoring the problem, you may suffer more costly property damage, and you may also allow a moist environment to exist that can aid in the formation of mold.

Where Can I find more information on mold?

State and Federal Mold Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
California State Indoor Air Quality Program
California Department of Health Services
Environmental Protection Agency
Environmental Protection Agency Indoor Air Quality Hotline: (800)
438-4318

Mold Resources for Property Owners, Landlords and Property Managers

Environmental Protection Agency Publications and Resources
Building Air Quality: A Guide for Building Owners and Facility
Managers
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Local Code Enforcement Agencies

Arvin (661) 854-3134
Bakersfield (city) (661) 326-3712
California City (760) 373-7445; (760) 373-7046
Delano (661)720-2234
Kern County (661) 862-8603; (800) 552-5376
Maricopa (520) 316-6927
McFarland (661) 792-3091 X2108
Shafter (661)746-2065
Taft (661) 765-4136 EXT 11
Tehachapi (661) 822-2222 EXT 117
Wasco (661) 758-7213