



IS MOLD AFFECTING **YOUR** HEALTH?

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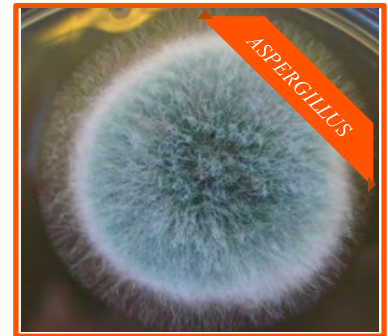
THE LOWDOWN ON MOLD

Mold is actually a natural process. In the wild, mold serves a positive purpose by breaking down organic matter such as fallen leaves, branches, and other kinds of decay. In your home, however, mold can wreak havoc. It can erode your home's natural structures, permeate your ducts and other interior surfaces, and cause health problems.

Though we often refer to this household contaminant as simply "mold," it actually comes in several species, types, and hues. These are the most common types in the household:

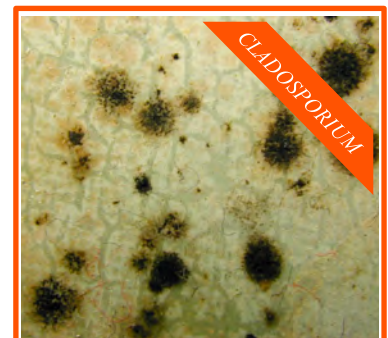
ASPERGILLUS

Aspergillus is one of the most common types of mold. Typically, we see it growing on food, toilet seats, and in home air conditioning systems. It follows a "pepper-like" pattern, and may be green or black. While it may be black in color, it's different from "black mold," which can be far more dangerous. Aspergillus is a common allergen in the home, particularly when it enters the ductwork and releases spores.



CLADOSPORIUM

This is a type of allergenic mold that is most commonly found in both natural and synthetic carpeting as well as wood surfaces such as flooring and cabinets. While Cladosporium likes warm climates, it may also grow in cool areas.





SERPULA LACRYMENS

With its distinctive yellow appearance, this type of mold is readily easy to identify. It most commonly hits wood structures, which causes dry rot. Unfortunately, serpula lacrymens may be hard to find, as it can lurk in the framework of your house, causing damage from the inside.



BLACK MOLD

Perhaps the type of mold homeowners fear most is black mold – and rightfully so. Black mold is the most dangerous kind of household mold and is mostly likely to grow in areas that are perpetually warm or damp. Bathrooms, basements, and crawl spaces are susceptible to the growth of toxic black mold. While most other forms of household mold are shades of gray or green, black mold is identifiable by its deep black and tarry appearance. Homeowners who notice black mold should take steps to remedy the situation immediately.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), your home is at highest risk for black mold if you've experienced extensive water damage, such as from a flood. But you don't have to be in a flood zone to notice the substance. Even if you're in an area with constant moisture, like a humid climate, your home could be at risk.

WHAT MAKES MOLD GROW?

We've seen plenty of mold in our years of experience, so we know how to recognize it and how it grows. Optimum mold growing conditions require three different parts:

- A “food source,” such as wood, tile, or drywall
- Moisture. There are several different types of mold, but all need moisture to grow.
- Optimum temperatures. Molds have different temperature preferences, so the optimum temperature range is wide – from 32–120 degree Fahrenheit.



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notes that mold is more likely to grow in environments where the humidity is above 30–60%. Older homes that don't have modern amenities like vents, exhaust fans, and proper ventilation are more likely to foster mold.

The most important thing to remember about mold is it can grow virtually anywhere.

Carpeting, drywall, foods, and even paper can grow mold, which releases spores to spread. A proactive approach to mold is the best way to protect the health of your loved ones in the home.

Keep in mind that appliances meant to make things clean – dishwashers, washing machines, and other water cleaners – can all house mold. It can even creep into your coffee maker.



WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF MOLD?

Mold growing outside the home is harmless, but when it makes its way into an interior, it can be quite destructive. Mold is a commonly allergenic substance, meaning adults, children, and pets are likely to develop a reaction to mold in the home. This is especially true for *aspergillus* in ductwork, since your cooling system will release spores into the air each time your climate control kicks in.



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What people may not fully realize about mold, however, is just how detrimental it is to our health. Many people assume that it just affects their respiratory system and sinuses. It does, but it also has far-reaching effects on the entire body.



COGNITIVE PROBLEMS

These issues are connected to neurological problems, but the symptoms are severe enough that they stand as their own issue. A few cognitive issues that can develop from living with mold are:

- Foggy thinking
- Confusion & Mental disorientation
- Trouble retrieving words
- Diminished IQ and impaired learning
- Memory loss
- Mood swings
- Dizziness

INFLAMMATION

Chronic fatigue, joint pain and muscle aches, including those connected with fibromyalgia, are often symptoms of exposure to mold.

NEUROLOGICAL ISSUES

Because mold affects our central nervous system, it wreaks havoc on the head. You can experience headaches and light sensitivity, depression, anxiety, Parkinson-like tremors, and slowed reflexes.

IMMUNE SUPPRESSION

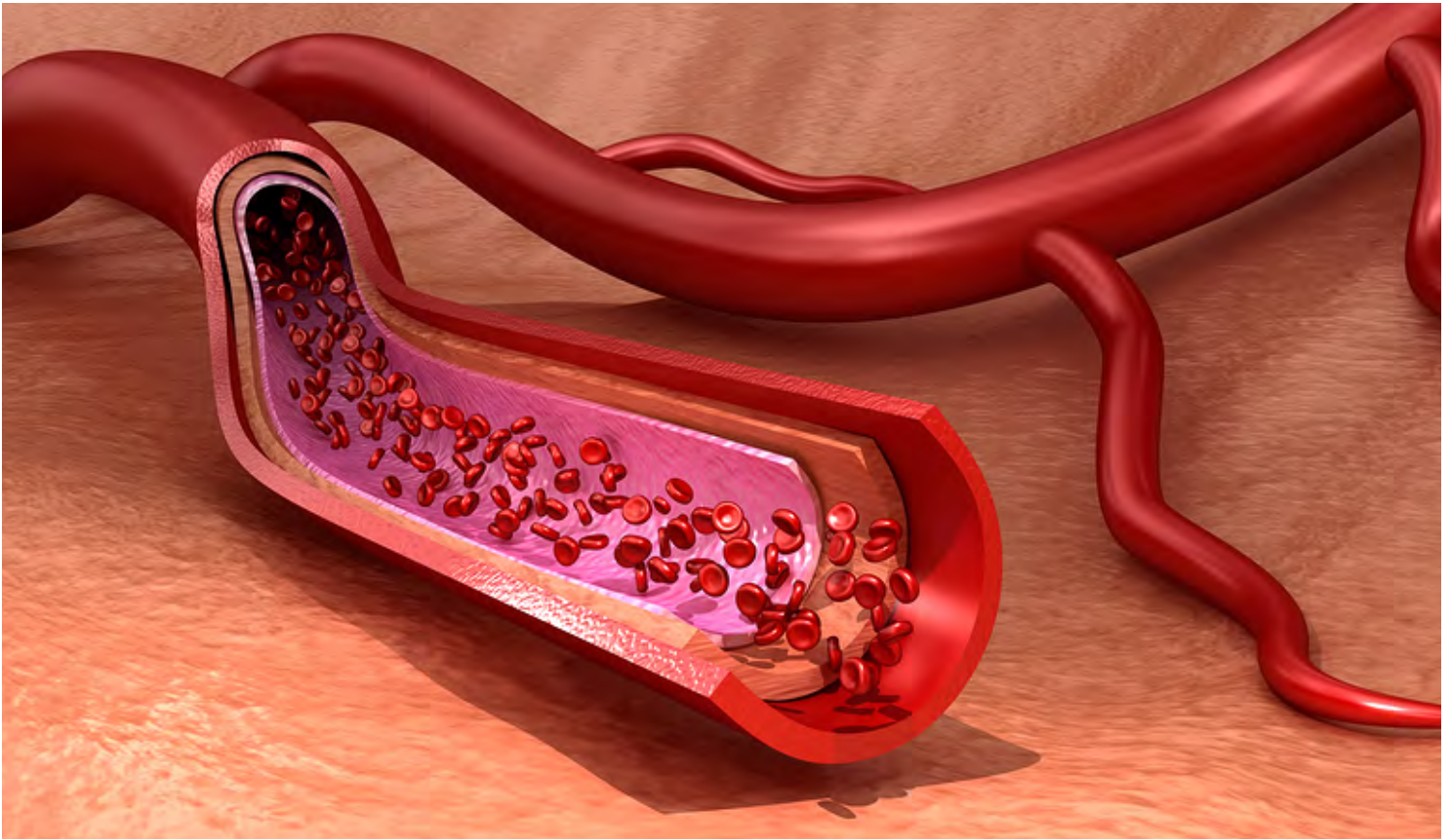
When your body sees mold, it treats it like a foreign invader to fight. However, when your immune system is constantly fighting against mold, it has a lower threshold to fight off other pathogens. People who live with mold are far more susceptible to secondary infections (bacterial, viral, and parasitic). One common signal to this internal battle is swollen lymph glands.

SKIN RASHES

Eczema, hives, or other types of rashes are the result of the body producing histamines, which are a natural defense to allergens. Other skin issues that mold can cause or exacerbate include psoriasis, dandruff, rosacea, and dermatitis.

HORMONAL IMBALANCES

Many women report erratic menstrual cycles and worsened menopausal symptoms after exposure to mold. It can even go so far as affecting fertility, and even fetal development, inducing miscarriages, and leading to impotence.



COMPROMISED DETOXIFICATION PATHWAYS

Toxic mold can damage the liver and lead to compromised detoxification functions. This in turn leads to accumulation of other wastes and toxins that then increase bodily inflammation – turning into a vicious cycle.

OTHER SYMPTOMS

- Hair loss
- Hearing loss
- Blurry or worsening vision
- Red, sore, bloodshot eyes
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Nausea & vomiting
- Low grade fever
- Night sweats

CIRCULATORY PROBLEMS

- Irregular heartbeat
- Heart inflammation
- Damage to heart
- Low blood pressure
- Bone marrow disruption
- Bleeding tendency
- Blood not clotting properly
- Hemorrhage - internal bleeding
- Vomiting up blood
- Bleeding in the brain and in other organs



EARLY SIGNS OF MOLD

Mold can affect each person differently, but if you or a family member are experiencing persistent symptoms that don't abate over time or improve when you leave the home, you may have a mold problem. Initial symptoms are wide ranging and may include:

- Watery eyes. Itchy eyes and watery discharge may indicate the presence of mold, particularly if these symptoms improve away from the home.
- Runny noses are another common symptom. Sneezing, sniffles, and cold-like symptoms that persist are often indicative of an allergic reaction.
- Wheezing. Children or adults who are severely allergic to mold may experience difficulty breathing or wheezing – particularly if they have a comorbid condition such as asthma.

Certain types of mold, such as toxic black mold, can release mycotoxins. Prolonged exposure to mycotoxins in susceptible individuals can lead to all of the symptoms we mentioned already. Dr. Richard Hyman, a doctor who regularly appears as a medical expert on programs like the "Today Show," also posits that mold can be a source contributing to yeast overgrowth in the human body, [which leads to a host of health problems](#).

Those with poor immune systems may suffer more serious side effects from mold exposure. Lung infections, pneumonia, and idiopathic pulmonary hemorrhage in infants have been reported in individuals living with mold, but a conclusive link between the two has yet to be established.

Mold can be especially dangerous to those with weakened immune systems and people undergoing chemotherapy. Mold can be a serious source of opportunistic infection in these vulnerable populations.



WHAT IF?

WHERE DO WE FIND MOLD?

Mold can grow anywhere there is moisture. This includes obvious places such as the bathroom or basement, but it may also be lurking where you least expect it. Ceiling tiles, furniture, carpets, ductwork, paneling, wallpaper, areas under the sink, and even the wood framework of your home can harbor mold. Any area of the home can be the source of a mold problem as long as conditions are conducive to growth.

Mold spores spread easily, so you may have a mold problem even if you think your home is clean. For example, mold from the outdoors may enter through the ductwork, vents, doors, or windows.

Even if you can't see mold, you might be able to recognize it by smell. If your home perpetually smells musty despite frequent cleaning, mold may be hiding somewhere not visible to the naked eye.

WHAT IF I SUSPECT I HAVE A MOLD PROBLEM?

We know that mold can hide in unsuspected places, causing a myriad of adverse health effects. If you suspect you have mold in your home, take steps to remove it. Prevention is the key to keeping your home healthy, but if you already have a mold problem, the worst thing you can do is ignore it. Mold never goes away on its own – left unchecked, it will continue to grow spores and release them throughout your living spaces, creating further health problems. In susceptible populations like newborns and those with weakened immune systems, the consequences of ignoring a mold problem can be serious.

It's best to tackle your mold problem head on as soon as you suspect it. Continue reading to learn how to safely remove mold from your home – and when it's time to call in an expert.



WHEN IT'S TIME TO CALL A PROFESSIONAL

Smaller mold infestations, including those on non-porous surfaces, can be easy to remove with appropriate precautions and one of the various solutions outlined above. However, more extensive problems on semi-porous surfaces may require an expert hand. The biggest challenge with removing mold is attending to all spores, which release in the air during the removal process.



Let a professional manage the big jobs.

Schedule a Free Home Assessment to see how the mold removal experts at AdvantaClean can help.

CALL NOW! 877-957-5670