

MOLD AVOIDANCE TIPS

Since molds are everywhere in our environment, it is almost impossible to totally eliminate them, but by following these helpful suggestions, one can significantly minimize mold exposure. Mold spores are present both outdoors and indoors.

INDOOR MOLDS

1. Keep the relative humidity in your home low. Obtain a gauge to measure relative humidity and try to keep it below 50%.
2. Allow adequate ventilation throughout your home to avoid moisture which would promote mold growth.
3. The use of a dehumidifier in the basement area or a room in the house that is particularly damp will decrease mold spores.
4. Window air conditioners need proper maintenance especially if they produce a musty odor. Use a simple disinfectant such as bleach and a water mixture to clean the air intake area of the air conditioner.
5. Indoor plants may contribute some molds to the environment. Spores from molds may become airborne especially during repotting, watering or disturbance of the plants. Clay pots are a potential source for molds.
6. Wood stored for fireplace use can have molds on the bark. Store fireplace wood outside.
7. Bathroom shower curtains should be washed or replaced regularly. It is a good idea to vent the bathroom after showers or baths. Tiles and other areas where mold grows should be cleaned with bleach.
8. Car air conditioners can be a major source of molds. A helpful suggestion is to first run the air conditioner with the windows open for the first few minutes while starting off on a trip. There are special cleaning solutions available to treat car air conditioners.
9. Molds grow in refrigerators, especially around the rubber door gaskets and in defrosting trays. A simple disinfectant such as bleach will prevent this growth. Regular cleaning is advised. Be careful with stored food, removing them immediately if spoiled.

OUTDOOR MOLDS

Outdoor molds are more likely to grow in moist, damp, humid areas. Particular seasons such as summer, spring and fall provide the right conditions to promote mold growth. Usually in winter, after the first frost, mold counts drop significantly. A strong rain can clean the mold out of the air, but increase them on the ground. Daily fluctuation also exists with mold counts increasing between 12:00 PM-2:00 PM and remaining high throughout the afternoon. It may be wise to stay in air conditioning during this time. One helpful suggestion that may provide some protection is to wear a face mask while raking leaves, cutting grass, working in barns or with compost.