

# How To Prevent and Get Rid of Mold in the Home



Department of  
Health & Mental  
Hygiene

Department of  
Housing Preservation  
and Development

**Mold is a type of fungus that can be found both indoors and outdoors. Hundreds of different kinds of mold are commonly found in the U.S., including in New York City. Mold can grow in wet or damp areas in the home. Exposure to mold can cause allergic reactions or trigger asthma attacks. Fortunately, mold can be controlled by fixing the underlying water problem, such as repairing leaks or reducing dampness, and cleaning up visible mold.**



## How can I identify mold?

- Mold can be many different colors, such as gray, black, green, yellow or orange.
- Mold may look furry, slimy or powdery.
- Some mold has a musty, stale or earthy smell.

## Where does mold grow?

- Mold can be found almost anywhere with water, high humidity or damp conditions, such as bathrooms and basements.
- Mold can grow on paper, fabric, wallpaper glue, drywall, wood, soap scum, leather and many other surfaces.
- Mold grows faster in warm temperatures and high humidity.

## How can I be exposed to mold?

- 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.



## What are the health effects of mold?

- People who are allergic or sensitive to mold may experience symptoms such as congestion, cough and runny nose.
- Mold exposure can make asthma symptoms worse or trigger attacks in people with asthma.
- Some people are at risk for more severe reactions to mold, including people who:
  - Are exposed to large amounts of mold at work (such as building demolition workers)
  - Have had or are undergoing certain medical procedures (such as chemotherapy or bone marrow or organ transplants)



If you think that you have or a family member has symptoms caused by mold exposure, talk to your health care provider. For help finding a provider, call **311** or 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692).

## How can I prevent mold from growing?

- Fix leaks. If you are a tenant, report the problem to the property owner.
- Dry out damp areas.
- Use an exhaust fan or a dehumidifier to remove moisture from the air.
- Open a window or door after showering if your bathroom does not have an exhaust fan.
- Open a window in your kitchen while cooking.

## How can I get rid of mold in my home?

Owners of private buildings with three or more apartments or buildings of any size where a tenant has been diagnosed with persistent asthma must keep tenants' homes free of mold. See the More Information section on the back of this brochure.

### **For small areas of mold (less than 10 square feet):**

- Use water and soap or detergent to clean mold on walls or other hard surfaces. Wash and dry shower curtains.
- Wear waterproof gloves while cleaning.
- Dry the cleaned area completely.
- Throw away any sponges or rags used to clean mold.

### **For large areas of mold (10 square feet or more) or mold that returns quickly after cleaning:**

- Report the problem to the property owner, if you are a tenant. If the problem is not fixed, call **311**.



## More Information

### For more information about mold:

- Call **311** or visit **[nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health)** and search for **mold**.
- Visit **[epa.gov/mold](https://epa.gov/mold)**.
- Visit **[cdc.gov/mold](https://cdc.gov/mold)**.

### For more information about property owners' responsibilities and safely fixing mold and other indoor allergen hazards:

- Visit **[nyc.gov/hpd](https://nyc.gov/hpd)** and search for **mold and pests**.

### For a list of mold contractors licensed by the New York State Department of Labor:

- Visit **[dol.ny.gov/mold-program](https://dol.ny.gov/mold-program)** and click on **licensing**.

