

MOLD ALLERGY INFORMATION

Molds are microscopic organisms that grow in moist, damp surroundings. They exist year-round and are found indoors (basement walls and floors, window moldings, shower curtains, bathroom walls and ceilings) and outdoors (airborne, trees, decaying trees, plants, etc.). Aspergillus and penicillium (not the antibiotic) are the most prevalent indoor molds.

Prevention Tips

The mold-allergic patient must keep his environment as free from mold as possible. Here are some preventive measures to try:

- Moisture-proof your basement or crawl space; keep it dry with a dehumidifier.
- Household plants are not a major source of mold. Clean them appropriately and minimize the number. Do not stir up the soil and keep plants out of the bedroom.
- Examine your air conditioner for mold. Clean filters and vents regularly.
- Discard old pillows, especially feather ones. Discard old newspapers, magazines, books, leather and cloth as well as old furniture.
- Cover pillows, mattresses and box springs with airtight encasements.
- Use air-conditioning whenever possible. Use an air filter.
- Vent clothes dryer to the outside.
- Store firewood outdoors.
- Choose upper-level bedrooms and apartments when possible.
- Molds grow in damp and dark closets—dry clothes and shoes before storing them.
- Wear an allergy mask when working in moldy or musty areas.
- Discourage allergic children from playing in heavily wooded areas or near stagnant water.
- Quickly refrigerate foods to retard mold growth.

COMMON SOURCES OF MOLD AND FUNGUS

Alternaria: Atmospheric mold. Found in dead, dried or decaying vegetation.

Cladosporium (Hormodendrum): Atmospheric mold; increases 1000x before rain. Found on decaying vegetation, leather, rubber, cloth, food and wood.

Candida (Albicans): Found in animals and in humans. It has been isolated from the skin and mucosa of humans but has also been recovered from leaves, flowers, water and soil.

Aspergillus: Found in old, damp, musty houses; onions as black mold; damp hay; leather goods; spoiled foods and decaying vegetation.

Penicillium: Common in bread mold, certain cheeses, blue mold rot in some fruits, leather and fabrics.

Mucor: Found in old, musty houses; furniture; furnishings; decaying fruit; barns and barnyards.

Aureobasidium: This yeast-like fungus is commonly found on caulk or damp window frames in bathrooms.

Aspergillus: May be pink or black in color. Although it seldom causes infections, it can be allergenic.

Helminthosporium: A widespread fungus that is most frequently associated with grasses, plant material, decaying food and soil.