

## MOLD ALLERGY

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 the 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 air-tight 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.

**Aspergillus:** Found in old damp, musty houses, in onions as black mold, damp hay, leather goods, spoiled foods and decaying vegetation. It may be pink or black in color. Although it seldom causes infections, it can be allergenic.

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

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

**Epicoccum:** Commonly found on house plants and soil or as spots on the leaves of plants. It is brown in color.

**Gibberella:** Found specifically on corn and is pink or red in color.

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

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