

Mold/Mildew and Asthma

Mold spores are allergens that can be found both indoors and outdoors. Molds are found indoors in dark, warm, and humid environments such as basements, attics, bathrooms, and laundry rooms. They are also found in air conditioners, humidifiers, refrigerator drip trays and garbage pails. Molds grow outdoors in moist shady areas. They are common in soil, decaying vegetation, compost piles, rotting wood, and fallen leaves. Mold growth outdoors is seasonal, first appearing in early spring and thriving until the first frost.

Additional History Questions to Supplement the History Form:

- Do you see mold growth in any part of your home?
- How large an area is the mold growth? (i.e. greater than 3 ft. x 3 ft?)
- Does your child's school (or other places he/she spends time) have mold growth?
- Do you have problems with moisture or leaks in your home?
- Do you frequently have condensation on your windows?
- Have you tried using something to decrease the humidity in your home?

Possible Interventions:

The emphasis should first be on controlling all sources of moisture in the house. Items that are too moldy to clean should be discarded. The size of the mold contamination in the house should determine how the mold gets cleaned up. Generally, an area of 3 feet x 3 feet or larger should be cleaned by a professional.

- Check faucets, pipes, and ductwork for leaks and repair as soon as possible
- Control indoor humidity
 - Use a dehumidifier or air conditioner (non evaporative or water-filled type) to maintain indoor relative humidity below 50%
 - Clean the dehumidifier as instructed by the manufacturer
 - Do not use a humidifier
 - Vent bathrooms and clothes dryers to the outside
 - Install and use exhaust fans in the kitchen, baths and damp areas
 - Avoid carpet and wallpaper in rooms prone to dampness
 - For those who own a home with an evaporative cooler, control the humidity level with a dehumidifier
- When first turning on home or car air conditioners, have your child leave the room or drive with the windows open for several minutes to allow mold spores to disperse
- Remove decaying debris from the yard, roof, and gutters
- Your child should avoid raking leaves, mowing lawns, or working with peat, mulch, hay, or dead wood if he/she is allergic to mold spores
- Clean small areas with detergent and water. Chlorine bleach solution diluted 1:10 provides cosmetic improvement and kills mold, but does not remove allergens. Be aware of respiratory irritant effect of bleach. Do not mix bleach and ammonia.
- For extensive mold contamination, (greater than 9 square feet – 3 ft. x 3 ft.) professional removal is recommended.

Follow-Up / Notes:

