Everything you need to know about
Mold

new orleans health department

What is Mold?

- Mold is a fungus. There are a wide range of mold species found both indoors and outdoors.
- Most molds are not harmful to people. Some people, such as those with asthma or allergies, can be more sensitive to molds.
- Molds usually appear as colored, woolly mats and have a musty, earthy smell.

Causes of Mold

Mold grows best in **warm, damp and humid conditions**. It can grow from any moisture source including:

- Leak in pipes, windows or roofing
- Heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) system
- Affected materials can include things like wood, upholstered furniture, sheetrock, plaster, wallpaper and carpet, glass, plastic and even metal and stone

After a leak, dry the wet or damp area within 1 - 2 days so mold does not grow.

Symptoms of Mold

- Stuffy nose, itchy eyes and skin, cough, or wheezing.
- If you have asthma, your symptoms may worsen.
- More severe symptoms include fever, shortness of breath and possible mold infections in the lungs.

If you or someone you know begins to experience symptoms, quickly remove the person from the mold-affected area. If symptoms continue or get worse, see a doctor.

Prevention

Use air conditioning (A/C) or dehumidifiers. If you do not have A/C, you can increase air flow by opening doors and windows and using fans.

Run the bathroom fan or open a window when showering.

Use stove top fans or open windows when cooking or running the dishwasher.

How to Clean Mold

- Remove and throw away all materials that cannot be cleaned, such as wallboard, fiberglass and cellulose insulation.
- Clean all remaining materials and allow the area to thoroughly dry.
- Clean hard surfaces with soap and water, or a bleach solution of no more than 1 cup of bleach per 1 gallon of water.
- Never mix bleach with ammonia or other household cleaners.
- While cleaning:
  - Open doors and windows.
  - Wear rubber gloves and protective eye wear.
  - Wear a protective mask.

For large cleanups, contact licensed contractors.

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