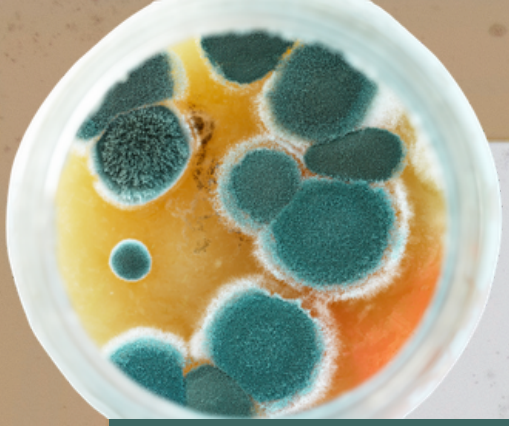


Stay SAFE From MOLD EXPOSURE

Molds release tiny spores and even smaller particles that travel through the air and can cause allergy, irritation or inflammation, or rarely, infection.

If you can see mold, water damage, or moisture, or smell mold, there is at least some increased health risk.

The more extensive or severe the dampness and mold, the greater the risk of health effects.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF MOLD EXPOSURE

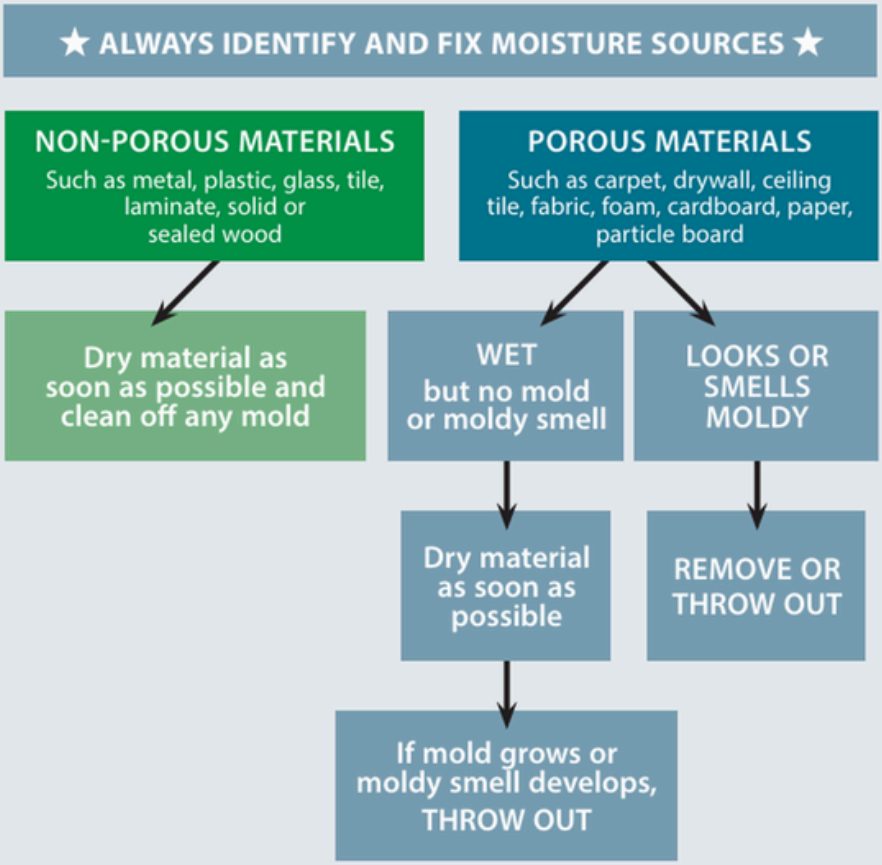
The health effects consistenly associated with indoor dampness and molds include:

- Causation of new asthma.
- Asthma attacks in those who already have asthma.
- Allergic rhinitis (sneezing, congested or runny nose).
- Upper respiratory symptoms like stuffy/congested nose or sinuses, sore throat, and irritated nose/throat.
- Lower respiratory symptoms like wheezing, breathing difficulty, shortness of breath, and coughing.
- Respiratory infection, like bronchitis.
- Eye irritation (burning, watery, or reddened eyes).
- Eczema and skin rashes/irritation.

CLEANING UP MOLD

The best way to fix a mold problem is to:

- Find where the damp areas and mold are.
- Fix any leaks or other moisture problems (such as condensation on windows or walls, garden sprinklers too close to your home, or blocked gutters).
- Quickly dry out any damp areas or replace any damp materials.
- Quickly and safely clean up mold and remove any materials that are moldy.
- The most important thing you can do is get rid of mold and dampness as quickly and safely as possible. Mold problems will not go away unless moisture problems are fixed.



CLEANING UP MOLD

Cleaning up mold quickly and safely is important, but unless you find and fix the source of moisture in your home, your mold problems will return. Protect yourself and others from mold and chemicals If you are susceptible to mold, or have a history of mold health effects, or the amount of mold is large, consider having another person or a professional do the work.

- Cleaning up mold can expose you to a lot of mold (10 to 1000 times more than usual), and also to irritating detergents or disinfectants. Contact Environmental Health Services for professional mold removal options at www.sjgov.org/department/envhealth or (209) 468-3420.
- Keep others out of the work area during clean-up.
- Use personal protective equipment like waterproof gloves, goggles or protective glasses, and a N-95 respirator (available at hardware stores) to keep you from breathing in mold. An N-95 respirator has two straps and has a NIOSH approval number printed on it. Make sure the respirator fits tightly around your face. Do not wear a "dust mask". It will not protect you from mold.
- Wear clothing that covers as much of your body as possible (including covering hair and shoes) and that can be washed in hot water or thrown out.
- Work for short time periods and rest where you can breathe fresh air.
- Air out your home well during and after the work. Respirators that protect you from mold spores will not protect you from chemical fumes from disinfectants. Make sure the work area has good air flow. Never use a gasoline engine indoors (like a gas-powered water pump, pressure washer, or generator). You could expose yourself and your family to toxic carbon monoxide.

TO LEARN MORE

Visit the California Department of Public Health's Air Quality Section (AQS) on Mold and Dampness
www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/cls/dehl/ehl/Pages/AQS/Mold.aspx

San Joaquin County Public Health Services
health grows here
www.sjcphs.org