

Helpful Information About Mold

Is all mold bad or just the “black” mold?

- Yes. If any mold is in high enough airborne concentration, it has the potential to be hazardous to your health.

So if all mold can be dangerous, why has “black” or “toxic” mold received so much media attention?

- Black mold or *Stachybotrys* can be toxic. It has received much media attention because of its unknown toxicity and its unknown long term affects on human health. Some have estimated that *Stachybotrys* is toxic only approximately 30 percent of the time it is present. Also, *Stachybotrys* is a sticky mold and is rarely airborne unless the building materials on which it has grown, has been disturbed. Other types of molds also can be toxic, but *Stachybotrys* is the more prevalent mold on drywall and similar water damaged building materials. Even if *Stachybotrys* is not toxic, it still should be regarded as an allergen due to its large size spore.

If I don't have “black” mold, then should I still be concerned?

- Yes. If you have mold growth present, there is potential for it to become airborne. Mold is an allergen. If you are allergic to it, have asthma, or are immune compromised, then you are at greater risk. Some estimate 15% of the population is allergic to mold. Simply put, we live in boxes called homes; if there is a mold source that constantly gives off mold spores, this “contamination” can compromise the air quality of a home.

What other considerations are there for mold besides health affects?

- Plain and simple, if you have mold growth in your home or business in Michigan, you have a building failure. This building failure will result in damage of building materials in addition to compromising indoor air quality with mold spores. It is a homeowner's duty to disclose water damage and mold growth, thus there is a potential to devalue the home. Also, have all moisture sources been adequately addressed? If not, mold growth will continue. Mold consultants have special moisture meters and other equipment to help determine all moisture sources.

Should I just sample the moldy material and send it to a lab?

- No. If it looks like mold and there has been a moisture source, determining the type of mold is not necessary. All mold is remediated in the same way. Air sampling may be appropriate to determine not only potential exposure to the mold, but to help determine if surrounding surfaces are also impacted or require cleaning.



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Can I just bleach the mold?

- No. Often, application of bleach is more hazardous to your health because the bleach vapors could irritate your lungs and/or injure your eyes, and because disturbing the mold growth by cleaning can easily lead to significantly increased numbers of airborne mold spores.

How is mold remediated anyway?

- Containment (plastic sheeting barriers) are set up, affected porous materials (drywall, carpeting, etc.) are removed, and remaining surfaces including semi porous materials (concrete wall, floor, wood studs, subflooring, etc.) with mold growth are then mechanically cleaned. All other surfaces are either HEPA vacuumed or wet wiped and an air scrubber with HEPA filtration is used to help reduce airborne mold spore concentrations.

If all visible mold is gone, am I okay?

- Not necessarily. Many people and even remediation companies focus on “removal” of visible mold. However, even if all signs of mold growth are gone, large numbers of microscopic airborne mold spores may still be present. Cleaning of surfaces and use of an air scrubber are critical after mold removal to help reduce high numbers of airborne mold spores.

Should I just call an abatement company if I see mold.

- No. An environmental consultant is your best bet. Although abatement companies and water damage restoration companies have the expertise and experience in removing mold and damaged building materials, they are not experienced in determining the total extent of damage or evaluating air quality.

What does an environmental consultant do?

- An environmental consultant’s role typically is to determine the moisture source(s) involved, determine the extent of mold damage, and determine the scope of work for abatement, or simply put, “size up the problem” and make the appropriate recommendations. Professional abatement is expensive. You can not afford to do too much or too little. Also, the environmental consultant’s role is to perform a third party post abatement inspection and sampling to confirm successful abatement.

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