How to Prevent Mold Growth

Moisture Control = Mold Control

- Do not leave wet laundry in the laundry basket or washing machine.

- Keep the relative humidity in your home below 60%.

- Run the bathroom exhaust fan or open a window while bathing.

- Use exhaust fans or open windows whenever cooking or washing dishes.

- Use a dehumidifier to dry out damp areas.

- Throw away wet carpeting, cardboard boxes, insulation, and other absorbant materials that have been very wet for more than 48 hours.

- Use downspouts and proper ground grading to direct rainwater and snow melt away from your house.

- Repair leaking roofs, walls, doors, and windows.

Quick Tips

- Scrub visible mold off of hard surfaces with detergent and water.

- Throw away absorbant materials that have been very wet for more than 48 hours.

- Repair water problems that may have contributed to mold growth.

- If you think mold is causing you or your family health problems, please see a doctor.

- For additional information, contact the Sarpy/Cass Department of Health.

Information for this brochure was provided by the EPA, the CDC, and the Healthy Homes Partnership.

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Mold and Moisture

Recommendations on How to Clean-Up and Prevent Residential Mold Growth

Mold and Moisture

What is Mold?

Mold is fungi that can be found in virtually every environment and can be detected, both indoors and outdoors, year round. Mold breaks down dead organic matter and reproduces by tiny spores.

What Causes Mold Growth?

Mold requires moisture, oxygen, and a food source (such as drywall, wood, or carpet) to survive. Mold may begin growing when its spores land on surfaces that are wet, and will continue to grow and reproduce as long as the surface remains wet. Spores can remain alive in a dormant state when conditions are not favorable for growth.

Where Can Mold be Found?

Outdoors, mold can be found in shady, damp areas or places where leaves or other vegetation is decomposing. Indoors, mold can be found where humidity levels are high, such as basements and bathrooms, or where water has been allowed to sit for longer than 48 hours. Mold can also be found:

- In attics under leaky roofs
- On wet clothes that are not dried quickly
- On windows and walls where condensation collects
- Under wallpaper or carpet
- In air conditioner units
- On drywall adjacent to plumbing leaks

Can Mold Affect Health?

All people have different levels of sensitivity towards mold. Most healthy people will have no reaction when exposed to molds. For those with a higher sensitivity to molds, exposure may cause watery eyes, runny or stuffed up noses, sneezing, itching, wheezing, headaches, and even asthma attacks.

People who may be affected more quickly and severly by mold exposure include: infants and children, the elderly, pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems, and those with respiratory conditions.

How to Clean-Up Household Mold

Scrub mold off hard surfaces with a mixture of laundry detergent and water. Rinse with clean water and quickly dry by using a fan. A mild mixture of chlorine bleach and water will also kill mold growing on surfaces. If you use bleach, follow these guidelines:

- Mix 1 cup bleach in 10 cups water
- Spray or sponge the bleach on the moldy area
- Leave bleach on for 15 minutes
- Rinse bleach off with water and dry quickly
- Keep bleach out of the reach of children

How to Protect Yourself

Wear long sleeves, pants, shoes and socks, rubber gloves, and goggles. Open a window to increase the amount of fresh air. Place moldy materials in plastic bags for disposal.

What to Throw Away

Throw away absorbant or porous materials such as carpet, drywall, ceiling tile, insulation, and cardboard boxes that have been very wet for more than 48 hours.

When to Ask for Help

If the amount of mold in your home is greater than 15 square feet, or if you suffer from any long-term illnesses, it is best to hire a professional to remove the mold.