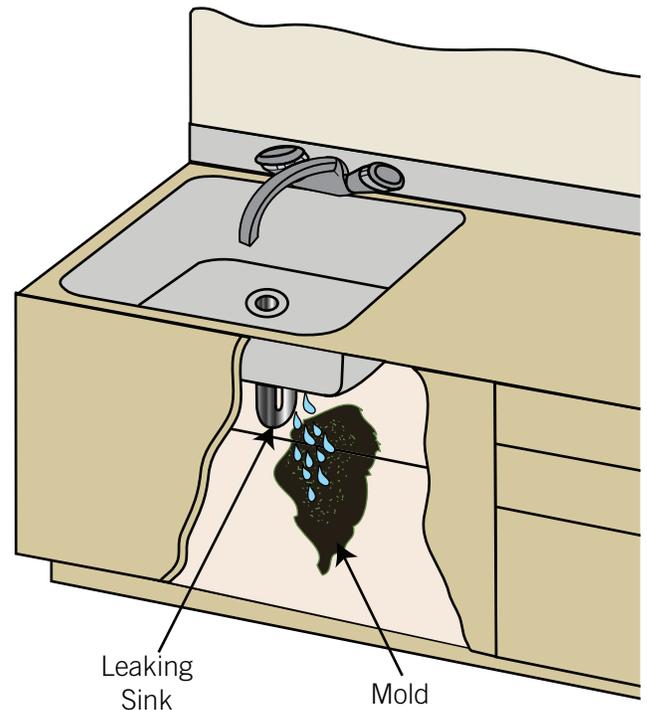


Mold in your Home

With so much in the news about the dangers of mold in your home, and the associated health risks, it is easy to get carried away with fear. As with most things, however, a little knowledge goes a long way – getting a clearer picture of the issues and solutions will not only reduce fear, but will also arm you with preventative tools.

Mold has been with us since the beginning of time. Believe it or not, you already have mold in your house. Leave a loaf of bread on your counter for a couple of weeks and you will see it grow. All mold needs to thrive and multiply is a food source, a little water, and oxygen.

Building materials are good food source for mold spores. Add water (you do not need to add oxygen since it's everywhere) and you have a mold problem. Water is the key to understanding and controlling mold since it is the only mold-growth factor you can control.



Repair Plumbing Leaks Promptly

What To Do About Mold

You can clean mold yourself if it appears in small amounts. If you find a large amount of mold, or if you suffer from any kind of lung condition, you should get someone else to clean it for you.

You can scrub mold found on hard surfaces with water and detergent. Mold in absorbent materials, however, such as carpets, is more difficult to clean. Better to just throw the carpet out. If you have a flood in your home, it is critical to dry things up quickly. Call in an expert who specializes in flood clean-up.

Government web sites offer free and detailed common sense guides on how to clean mold:

- Centers For Disease Control And Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Preventative measures

- Deal promptly with water leakage in areas such as the roof, plumbing, and basement.
- Keep indoor humidity levels at 50% or lower. In cold climates during winter, 50% is still too high. Condensation on the windows indicate that you have too much humidity. Check the chart on your humidifier.
- Make sure your clothes dryer vents to the outside rather than into the house. Check the discharge pipe, too, as these pipes often become disconnected.
- Use your bathroom ventilation fan when showering or bathing, and leave the fan running for about twenty minutes afterwards. Similarly, use your kitchen range hood to discharge steam outside when cooking.
- A central air-conditioning system effectively reduces humidity levels in warm weather. If areas of your home seem humid during air-conditioning season, you may develop a condensation problem. Sometimes adding a return air vent in the damp area, or adding a damper to the ducting that supplies the area, can improve humidity levels dramatically. Dehumidifiers also help, but be aware that they are expensive to run and do not condition the house. Ask an air-conditioning technician to look at the situation.
- Do not put carpets in damp or humid areas. Also, keep furniture and storage away from the wall to ensure good air circulation.

Mold may be here to stay but it can be controlled. Look for dampness in your home and deal with it promptly.

