

Understanding Mold Allergies

The Basic Facts on Mold

Molds are microscopic fungi and are made up of clusters of filaments that live on plant or animal matter, which they decompose for nourishment. Many molds reproduce by releasing spores into the air, which settle on other organic matter and grow into new mold clusters. Mold can be found wherever there is moisture, oxygen and something organic to feed on. Since molds need moisture or water to survive, the key to combating mold is to control moisture by keeping areas dry and humidity low.

Q: Where are molds found?

A: Molds are present both outdoors and inside the home. Outdoor molds can be found in fallen leaves, rotten vegetation, poor drainage areas and in other shady, damp areas. Mold spores can travel through the air and come into the home. Indoor molds can grow in areas that don't have enough ventilation or have water pooling, along with the typical warm, dark or humid areas such as showers or basements. Moisture and warmth speeds up the growth of mold on most surfaces.

Q: What can I do to control mold inside?

A: Since mold needs moisture to survive, increasing ventilation to keep areas dry and reducing humidity is the best route to preventing mold growth. Use dehumidifiers and air conditioners to get humidity to levels to between 35-40% and use mildewcide or bleach to kill growth and prevent regrowth. Use air vent filters to keep spores from circulating through vents and try specialized convection heat units that are designed to kill mold spores.

