

# Smart Words for Smart Homeowners

THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERTS AND THEIR ADVICE ON RELEVANT HOMEOWNER TOPICS

## What Mold Needs To Grow

### Overview

Mold are fungi can be found both indoors and outdoors. No one knows how many species of fungi exist but estimates range from tens of thousands to perhaps three hundred thousand. According to Michael Pugliese, author of "The Homeowners Guide to Mold", there are three main necessities that mold spores need to grow and thrive:

- 1) A food source.
- 2) A source of moisture.
- 3) A place to grow.

### Food Source

Mold spores need food in the literal sense as well as other materials; wood, paper, cotton, leather, wood, porous products, waste products and others. The most dangerous materials mold loves to grow on are porous materials; beds, bare wood, couches, wall board, etc. Its often impossible to remove mold growth from some of these items.



### Moisture

Mold spores need moist or damp areas to grow and continue to reproduce. Watch for flooding, leaky pipes or windows, etc. Also excess moisture in the bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms are prime areas for mold growth.

### Optimum Temperatures

Mold spores thrive in temperatures between 32o and 120o Fahrenheit. Temperatures from 70o to 90o are the most conducive for mold growth. Chances of mold growth are heightened greatly between those temperatures especially when the other conditions are also ideal.

You may be wondering why mold can grow in your freezer. Mold doesn't die when temperatures drop

below 32°. Spores lay dormant until temperatures raise or they are reintroduced to other favorable conditions.

### Suitable Conditions For Indoor & Outdoor Mold

- 1) A relative Humidity of roughly 50% or higher. A good preventative measure would be to purchase a hygrometer to measure humidity levels in your home. Exterior conditions favorable too mold are almost constant.
- 2) Damp or Dusty Conditions. Avoid developing piles of rags, clothing or other mold food sources.
- 3) Stagnant air. This explains why overly tight homes designed for energy efficiency can have mold problems.

### Recommendations From The CDC

- 1) Use an air conditioner or a dehumidifier during humid months. Make sure to keep your home interior relative humidity down below 50%.
- 2) Be sure the home has adequate ventilation, including efficient exhaust fans.
- 3) Add mold inhibitors to paints before application. Good paint stores sell it.
- 4) Clean bathrooms with mold killing products.
- 5) Do not carpet bathrooms and basements.
- 6) Remove or replace previously soaked carpets and upholstery.
- 7) Good circulation throughout the home is important to eliminate dampness or potential moisture; especially in attics, basements, crawlspaces, laundry rooms.



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