
Black Mold, Its Effects & How To Rid Your Home Of It



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What Is "Black Mold"?

Often, when individuals, whether in the news or other forms of public media, discuss "black mold" they are talking about a certain type of mold. This mold is scientifically categorized as *Stachybotrys Chartarum*. It will appear as a greenish black mold in color although it is only deemed "black" mold.

Black mold is also often referred to as "toxic mold". More often than not, black mold can be seen forming in areas around a home that has higher humidity levels (above 55%) indoors, or in places that have suffered water damage or are more prone to become water-soaked such as basements, kitchens, and bathrooms.

The damp conditions make a perfect breeding ground for the small spores to multiply. The way in which mold reproduces is through these microscopic spores that are created when the conditions are right. Most mold grows, or reproduces, in damp areas, as mentioned previously.

With ever increasing changes in the Earth's weather patterns, the more "wet" weather, the more chance of having a "black mold" infestation. Your home is more prone to a black mold invasion if you live in an area that is exposed to frequent flooding or extremely wet, and/or humid, conditions.

Black mold can grow on anything porous. Including wood, cement, paper, clothing of all types, behind wallpaper, ceiling tiles, and other common household building materials.

With that said, it is also very common to find black mold growing rampant on gypsum board, more well known as 'drywall', which is a major part of any home construction project.

It is important to note that mold spores are all around us all the time and that no home is immune to them. No matter how clean you keep it indoors. You must understand that when mold reproduces, it is damp. However, when this newly formed grouping of mold dries, it can become airborne, whether this be indoors or out. Due to this, there is always a great possibility that if there is any type of excess moisture build up within your home, mold could begin growing inside.

Is Black Mold Hazardous To My Health?

There is most certainly a good chance that black mold can become hazardous to your health. The chances for this increases in those individuals that suffer from allergies, immune deficiencies, or respiratory problems such as asthma. Most people will never have adverse reactions to any type of mold, including black mold in most cases. However, continued exposure to black mold can have some interactions with a persons health, even though this has not been scientifically proven through testing as of yet.

As is becoming the case with many schools in high flood or extreme humid zones throughout the world. Any building that was constructed with the use of porous materials used in their construction can produce mold growths.

Many molds are non-harmful in most cases, including black mold. Although you will see the word "toxic" used in correlation with the term black mold in many media resources. As discussed earlier in this section, the mold itself is only harmful, or "toxic" to those individuals that suffer from respiratory disorders, immune deficiency diseases, or allergies. These are the people that should be most concerned with feeling increased affects from black mold in general.

So, why then, are so many resources telling you that black mold is indeed "toxic"? Let's take a look at public media sources. . .

It is the media's sole job to inform you of what is going on in the world at large. More often than not, world news can be quite boring, so to speak. These sources of information need to "beef" up their newscasts. And so, you will see an increase in shocking reports. And by delivering this type of newscast, more individuals are prone to "tune in" thereby increasing that particular news channel's ratings.

The same is true for printed news resources such as local newspapers. With the increase of an "imagined" threat, more consumers are ready, and willing, to spend their money to make their families as safe as possible. Enter the outside companies ready to take that money for unnecessary cleaning supplies.

Of course, everyone wants to be healthy, and care for the health of their loved ones, but, that doesn't mean others should take advantage of your caring nature. There are simple and very effective ways to rid your home of black mold which we will discuss later on in another chapter that won't cost you hundreds of dollars.

With the research compiled for the content of this report, there is enough evidence to support the claim that only those with the above listed pre-existing health conditions

should be concerned about the hazardous affects of black mold.

At this stage, with the available tests that have been performed on black mold, it is more of a household nuisance than one of serious health risk concern for most people across the world.

However, if you find that areas of black mold are growing at an increased rate, even if you are not someone affected by it, you may want to take steps to disinfect and clean these areas immediately before it becomes a problem for you.

Most Common Places To Find Black Mold

Black mold can be found in any area that is dimly lit, damp, and humid. Anywhere that water can build up is a breeding ground for black mold. This includes areas inside your walls where pipes can begin leaking or "sweating", underneath or inside kitchen cabinets, within refrigerator drip pans, inside ventilation duct work, basement areas, garages, attics, crawl spaces, under carpets, on clothing, and furniture upholstery.

When you begin to search for black mold in your home, be sure to have a flashlight so that you can look inside places where no light will reach. The best place to begin is from the sub-ground levels up.

If you use your basement area for a lot of storage, be sure to check any cardboard boxes for black mold infestations. If your home has suffered any type of flood damage, the basement is an excellent place to begin searching since the conditions there are almost always perfect for mold growths.

Here is a simple checklist you can use when you find black mold growths in your home:

Basement Level

- Check all wooded areas including basement steps for any mold growths
- Check all cardboard boxes, especially towards the bottoms for mold. If mold is found

outside the boxes, be sure to look through the contents of the boxes to see if any of it has also begun to grow mold

- Check any areas where water may have condensed for mold growths, especially around washing machines, dryers, water tanks, and heating units
- Check areas around any exposed plumbing work either on the ceilings or walls for mold growth
- For finished basements, check around all baseboards for any signs of new mold growth. You may have mold forming under your carpets which will need to be completely removed
- If you have installed any type of "drop ceiling" type tile, quickly survey each tile for any signs of mold growth
- Be sure to take note of any musty or "mildewy" smells within your basement or crawl space area. This is usually a good indicator that mold is present

First Floor Level

- Bathrooms are almost always a target for mold and mildew, so be sure to check the bathroom area thoroughly. Check shower curtains, tiles, behind toilets, the rim of the toilet bowl, underneath sink cabinets, inside linen closets, etc. for any sign of mold growth
- Kitchens are a terrific breeding source for mold. Check inside all kitchen cabinets, sink splash areas, underneath refrigerator drip pans, inside rubber seals on the refrigerator doors, inside and around dishwashers, or any other place that may suffer from water damage either by flooding or water leakage
- Check around the interiors of your windows, especially around the wooded molding areas for any mold growths. If you regularly see misty water build up on the glass of your windows, it's a safe bet that there will be mold either about to form or already have formed there
- Check walls behind furniture that are located near windows for any mold growths
- Be sure to check any closet areas for mold growths where you may be storing any type of clothing or shoes that were exposed to wet weather
- Check around all the baseboards of your home for any mold growths, even the smallest

spots. These spots can be greenish-black, blueish-black, white, orange, or even pink or purple

- Check around ceiling corners and bottom wall corners for mold growths of any size. If you have found a substantial area of mold growing towards the bottoms of your walls, it is a good bet that there may be mold forming underneath your carpets, if your floors are carpeted. Pull back the carpet closest to the spots of mold growing on your wall bottoms to see if there is any there as well
- Inspect all discolored areas on your ceiling for roof leaks, take note of where those are and see if any mold has begun to form there
- Look for peeling wallpaper and inspect behind those areas for any mold spots
- If your laundry room is located on the first floor, be sure to check behind the washer and dryer for any mold that may be forming. If you have wet clothing lying around, be sure to check those as well for greenish-black colored mold as well
- Be sure to inspect your attached garage for mold growth areas. Pay close attention to any discolored areas that may have been exposed to water leakage

Second Floor Level

- Bathrooms are almost always a target for mold and mildew, so be sure to check the bathroom area thoroughly. Check shower curtains, tiles, behind toilets, the rim of the toilet bowl, underneath sink cabinets, inside linen closets, etc. for any sign of mold growth
- Kitchens are a terrific breeding source for mold. Check inside all kitchen cabinets, sink splash areas, underneath refrigerator drip pans, inside rubber seals on the refrigerator doors, inside and around dishwashers, or any other place that may suffer from water damage either by flooding or water leakage
- Check around the interiors of your windows, especially around the wooded molding areas for any black mold growths. If you regularly see misty/foggy water build up on the glass of your windows, it's a safe bet that there will be mold either about to form or already have formed there
- Check around all the baseboards of your home for any mold growths, even the smallest spots. These spots can be greenish-black, blueish-black, white, orange, or even pink or purple

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- Check around ceiling corners and bottom wall corners for mold growths of any size. If you have found a substantial area of mold growing towards the bottoms of your walls, it is a good bet that there may be mold forming underneath your carpets, if your floors are carpeted. Pull back the carpet closest to the spots of mold growing on your wall bottoms to see if there is any there as well
 - Look for peeling wallpaper and inspect behind those areas for any mold spots
 - Check walls behind furniture in bedrooms near windows for any mold growths
 - Be sure to check any closet areas for mold growths where you may be storing any type of clothing or shoes that were exposed to wet weather
 - Inspect all discolored areas on your ceiling for roof leaks, take note of where those are and see if any mold has begun to form there

Attic or Top Level

- Take a flash light with you and inspect all trusses, insulation, any drywall, or other exposed areas for new mold growths
- Pay close attention to any cracks close to the roof area of your attic for any type of water damage. If there are no signs of mold growth, there could be if gone unchecked or repaired

While of course this isn't all the places that mold can be hiding, these are some of the major areas in and around your home that you will find it creepily growing. You want to be sure that you check each and every area that is dimly lit, prone to dampness, and higher humidity levels.

Another sure sign that there is mold lurking about is the mildewy or musty smell that will accompany its growth. If you smell this, then be sure to thoroughly inspect the area that the smell is coming from. You may not see any visible mold growing just yet, but its a safe bet that it will be doing so very soon.

How To Rid Your Home Of Black Mold

Once you have completely finished inspecting your home and found even the smallest infestation of black mold growth, its time to begin ridding your home of it. Especially before it begins growing out of control and taking over your house!

Since most all mold reproduces with a combination of dampness and darkness, the first thing you should do is begin drying out your home. This can be done with a dehumidifier unit that you can purchase affordably enough from any home supply store, or a major store such as Wal-Mart that sells these types of units.

You will be surprised at the amount of humidity in the air once you begin running a dehumidifier unit. The purpose of a dehumidifier is to suck natural moisture out of the air inside your home. Be sure that you empty the water collection bucket regularly as mold can grow within this as well if left unchecked for extended periods of time.

Having a dehumidifier is important especially if you run any type of air conditioning or heating unit regularly in your home and you can physically see moisture build up on your window panes. Window air conditioning units are good for this type of moisture build up excessively. So, if you use these, its a really great idea to pick up a dehumidifier.

While having a dehumidifier is step one in drying up your home, its also important to fix any water leaks around your home as well to prevent further mold build up and growth.

To further improve the quality of your home's air, you can consider purchasing an air filtration unit such as Ionic Breeze(tm). This will trap some of the pesky mold spores that travel through the air from outdoors into your home and stop some mold growth before it even starts. These units can be rather pricey, so be sure to shop around and find the best unit that fits into your budget and will get the air cleaning done.

If you already have mold growth then this next step is very important to the removal and continuation of rampant mold developing. You will want to use a bleach-water solution mixture of 1 Part Chlorine Bleach to 10 Parts Water. This is roughly One-Half to Three-Fourths Cup of Bleach to 1 Gallon of Water.

You may also want to purchase some disposable cleaning supplies for this job as you won't want to hang on to them as they will become contaminated afterwards. So a pair of non-porous rubber gloves, a few dollar sponges and/or hand held scrubbers would be perfect, depending on where the mold is growing.

There is no need to leave the bleach-water solution set for any amount of time. Simply spray it on, wait for a duration of around 10 to 15 minutes, and then scrub the mold until the surface comes clean and clear of mold. You may want to leave the bleach solution set for a few minutes longer to loosen up those hard to scrub moldy areas before trying to re-clean and remove the mold.

This bleach-water solution can be used for wooden or rubber baseboards so long as there is no threat of your carpet being ruined from using it, or the wood being warped or otherwise damaged from the watery solution. If so, you can always lay down a plastic painting tarp on any areas you fear may be ruined by bleach. It can also be used for walls if necessary so long as the bleach will not ruin them. If you are going to be using the bleach-water solution on wooded areas, you may want to make use of large fans to dry the area more quickly after cleaning.

NEVER combine ammonia with bleach for any reason as this can create hazardous fumes by doing so. Only use bleach-water solutions and nothing else added to them to prevent further health issues.

Now, if you encounter mold underneath your household carpeting, furniture, or upholstery, you may want to consider completely removing any of these items. The reason being is that even with steam cleaning, it may not, and most likely will not, remove the mold spores. The best course of action is to remove the moldy materials, clean any other areas that were exposed to the moldy items, and then begin fresh with brand new materials.

Of course, this is going to be costly to replace, but necessary for complete mold removal if the infestation is there. However, if you have experienced flooding within your home, and catch it right away, you may be able to air dry your carpet and furnishings by using large fans to "blow dry" the areas and prevent mold growth from starting.

Another good combination is using detergent-water for cleaning hard floors and walls after flooding has occurred.

Once your home has been completely disinfected and mold removed, a great way to keep mold from coming back is to invest in a vacuum cleaner that features a HEPA filtration system within it. This will trap most of the mold spores before they have a chance to begin growing again in damp, warm, dark areas in your home.

I hope that this guide has been useful to you in understanding and ridding your home of black mold. I wish you all the very best in life and protecting you and your family's health.

At the end of this report, you will find more reading resources to educate yourself even more about black mold and how to remove it from your home.

Best wishes,

Fred Jenkins

Additional Resources For Extra Reading:

<http://www.state.sd.us/denr/DES/WasteMgn/BlackMold.htm>

http://www.moldnews.net/2003_Apr/Stop%20the%20Fungus%20Among%20Us.htm

http://www.sdmold.com/what_is_mold.html

http://www.askthebuilder.com/556_Mold_and_Black_Mold.shtml

<http://www.theforagerpress.com/bookstore/blackmold/blackmold.htm>

<http://www.legends-enviro.com/articles/library.htm>

<http://moldetect.com/black-mold.htm>

http://www.floodwaterdamage.com/roof_leak.htm

<http://www.rsg-technologies.com/mold-removal.htm>

<http://www.moldtestservices.com/mold.html>

<http://www.neworleanscitybusiness.com/viewStory.cfm?recID=14843>