



Southwest Center

Pediatric Environmental Health

Facts About Mold

What is mold?

- Mold (mildew), mushrooms, and yeast are all types of fungi. Fungi are found both indoors and outdoors.
- Hundreds of different kinds of mold are commonly found throughout the United States.

How does mold grow?

- Mold needs water and food. It can grow almost anywhere there is water, high humidity, or damp conditions.
- Mold grows faster in warm temperatures and high humidity.
- Mold can feed on paper, fabric, wallpaper glue, sheetrock, wood, soap scum, leather, and many other surfaces.

How are people exposed to mold?

- You can breathe in mold particles if mold is disturbed or damaged.
- You can also breathe in tiny spores (similar to seeds) that mold may release into the air.
- You can touch mold and get it on your skin.
- You can swallow mold if you eat moldy or spoiled food.

What are the health effects of mold?

- Some people are allergic to molds.
- Mold exposure may cause or worsen asthma symptoms, hay fever, or other allergies.
- The most common symptoms of mold exposure are cough, congestion, runny nose, and trouble breathing. Symptoms usually disappear after the mold contamination is removed.

I am very concerned about mold in my children's school and how it affects their health.

- If you believe your children are ill because of exposure to mold in their school, first consult their health care provider to determine the appropriate medical action to take. Contact the school's administration to express your concern and to ask that they remove the mold and prevent future mold growth. If needed, you could also contact the local school board.