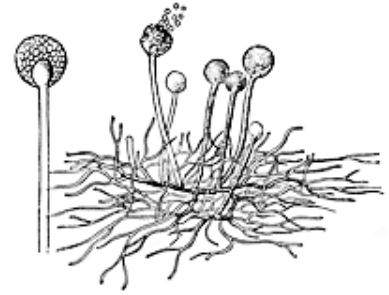


GETTING YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL: CONTROLLING MOLD ALLERGY

A FACTSHEET FROM THE MOUNT SINAI ASTHMA PROGRAM



Did you know...?

Molds can cause symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness in people who have asthma and are allergic to them. Molds are found both indoors and outdoors. Mold present on floors or other surfaces release spores into the air. When breathed in, these spores can cause people who are allergic to mold to have allergy and asthma symptoms. Outdoor molds grow where there are things like fallen leaves, stacked wood, dense forests, on the surface of trees, and areas where there is standing water or poor drainage. Molds can grow inside the home if there is high humidity or dampness in any part of the home. Live plants in the home also increase the chance of mold growth.

How do I know if I have mold allergies?

An allergy test by a doctor can help determine if your asthma and allergy symptoms may be due to contact with molds.

What can I do to control my mold allergies?

Successfully controlling your mold allergies may take more than one approach. Below are some tips to help you get started:

- * **During the summer and fall season** – when outdoor mold counts are high, keep the windows and doors of your house closed and keep the air-conditioning on. This helps keep mold spores from entering your home. You should also do the same when traveling in the car.
- * **Avoid** – places where molds are likely to be found (e.g., fallen leaves, bark of trees, garden debris, standing water). If you must go to these places you should use a well-fitted face mask and goggles to reduce your exposure.
- * **Keep moisture down indoors** – indoor mold grows in moist areas. Keeping the humidity level in your home down can help reduce the amount of mold present. Follow these steps to lower the humidity in your home:
 - Fix any water leaks as soon as you recognize the problem. The longer water sits, the more likely mold will grow.
 - Increase ventilation by using exhaust fans or opening a window.
 - Vent your clothes dryer to the outside.
- Use an air-conditioner in the home during the summer months and at other times of high humidity.
- Use a de-humidifier in areas where the humidity is high.
- Monitor the humidity level in your home with a humidity gauge. To prevent mold growth, the humidity should stay below 50%.
- Avoid using humidifiers in the home. If one is used, make sure that the humidity never goes above 50%.
- Use a sump pump in your basement if it is likely to flood when it rains.
- * **Clean or remove moldy items** – clean moldy surfaces with a solution of 1 part bleach to 4 parts water to reduce mold growth. For severely moldy items, it is better to remove the item (e.g., moldy carpet)
- * **Cover** – your mattress, box spring and pillows with special allergy-proof covers.

Special allergy-proof covers for you mattress, pillows, and box spring can be ordered from one of these companies:

- Allergy Clean Environments – 800-882-4110
- Allergy Control Products – 800-422-3878
- National Allergy Supply Inc. – 800-522-1448
- Mission Allergy – 877-662-5537
- Allergy & Asthma Technology Ltd. – 800-621-5545