

Mold in Homes

Is a mold test needed?

In most cases, according to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, if visible mold growth is present, testing is unnecessary. Mold found in a home needs to be properly cleaned or removed and the area disinfected. It is critical the moisture source is identified and eliminated or the mold will return. We look for mildew/mold as part of our home inspection, and if found, recommend how to repair the moisture source.

A water leak, water intrusion or high humidity levels can lead to mold, mildew, or other biological growth. Although mold spores are always present in the outdoor and indoor air, the interior of a house can provide the ideal environment needed for growth. Mold commonly develops in humid summer weather, in closed houses or confined areas especially wherever it is damp, warm, poorly lighted and/or where air is not well circulated. Depending on the severity, conditions can lead to rot, structural damage, and a variety of health issues for a home's occupants.

For more information concerning mold, consult EPA's Brief Guide to Mold in your home at: www.EPA.gov/mold/moldguide.html or The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health at: www.wvdhhr.org/rtia/pdf/iaq_info_sheet.pdf

Actions that control mildew levels:

1. Repair any plumbing leak.
2. Control or eliminate any water intrusion or ground water seepage in the home.
3. Reduce the humidity level by using air conditioners, dehumidifiers and/or exhaust fans. High indoor humidity caused by normal activities of everyday living such as showering, cooking, and drying clothes, can also be a source of mold, mildew or musty odors. Indoor humidity levels between 30% and 50% are ideal.
4. Make sure the clothes dryer vent and bathroom exhaust fans are in working order and are vented to the exterior.
5. Increase ventilation or air movement by opening doors and/or windows, when practical. Use fans to circulate air as needed.
6. Cover cold surfaces that have moisture condensation, such as metal air conditioning ductwork, cold water pipes, well pressure tanks and water heaters with insulation.
7. Use heating or lighting to help dry a damp area if necessary.

Mold testing may be necessary if you have a mold allergy or related health issues. Testing can also be useful to determine if mold has been adequately cleaned or remediated. We do not perform mold testing, but we do identify moisture sources that promote mold growth.