



## MOULD FAQ'S AND FACTS

### Is your property at risk?

- Has your property ever experienced a leak from the plumbing, roof, windows, or basement?
- Are there any visible signs of leakage or water damage in your home?
- Are there any visible signs of mould (fungi) in your home?
- Is there a damp musty smell in your home?

If you answer **YES** to any of these questions, mould and mould -related issues may already be in your home.

### Are you at risk?

- Do you or your family members suffer from: Headaches, coughing, congestion, respiratory distress, rashes, irritated eyes, nose, and/or throat while in the home?

If you answer **YES** to any of these symptoms you may be suffering from exposure to a toxic or allergenic amount of fungi (herein called “mould”). Long-term exposure to toxic mould contamination can lead to serious health problems.

### FACTS:

It is a fact that moulds (fungi) produce allergens and irritants that can cause exposed individuals to experience symptoms of hay fever i.e. sneezing, runny nose, skin rashes, irritated eyes as well as nose, throat, and lung ailments. The term “mould” will be used to refer to the toxic or highly allergenic forms of fungi present in our environment. The vast majority of airborne fungi at reasonable levels are harmless to the average human being.

Some toxic moulds produce poisonous substances called mycotoxins. These toxins interfere with cell structures and processes, and have the potential to cause serious health issues. Their effects to the human body have been documented using controlled conditions in a laboratory. Mycotoxins have been proven to be present indoors with victims suffering from: pulmonary hemorrhage or pulmonary hemosiderosis (primarily in infants), headaches

and other flu-like symptoms, nose bleeds, immune system suppression (resulting in increased numbers of infections), hair loss, chronic fatigue, psychological depression, diarrhea, sore throat, dermatitis. Again, note that the vast majority of fungi found in homes in excess amounts are allergenic, not toxic, in nature. Simple testing can verify the difference.

**Other symptoms that have been associated with mould:**

"burning" eyes, blurred vision, respiratory illness, chest pains, chest tightness, shortness of breath, wheezing, dry cough, nasal congestion, aggravated asthma, cognitive disorder.

**COMMON QUESTIONS:**

- **CAN I HAVE A MOULD PROBLEM IF MY HOUSE NO MATTER THE AGE OF MY HOUSE?** You can have mould no matter the age of your house. Under the right conditions for mould to grow ( MC gt 60%, and cellulose source), it can manifest itself within 24 hours or the wood used to construct the home may have already been contaminated with mould.
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- **HOW DOES MOULD BECOME A PROBLEM?** Fungal spores are everywhere. In order for mould to grow, moisture must be present. The necessary moisture can simply come from prolonged high humidity or from more catastrophic events such as floods, sewer backflows, leaky roofs or plumbing leaks. Once surfaces get wet, if it does not dry out or dries out slowly, mould spores can germinate and begin to grow on surfaces that provide a food source.
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- **HOW DO I KNOW IF THE MOULD IN MY HOUSE IS TOXIC TO MY FAMILY AND MY PETS?** There is no way to be absolutely certain without testing results from a certified laboratory, as well as a consultation with a personal physician.
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- **SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT MOULD IN MY HOME OR OFFICE?** Mould is a naturally occurring part of a healthy ecology. It is common to find fungal spores in the air both outside and inside your office or home. In fact, most of the fungi that you find indoors comes from outside. The spores are carried in by the air currents and some are deposited in the interior of the building, while the bulk of the spores are carried out of the building by the same air currents. Generally, as long as the indoor fungal spore levels are no higher than outdoor levels there are few adverse reactions to the fungi. However, according to the California Department of Health Services, as the amount of fungi becomes more extensive or fungal spore levels become elevated, it can cause allergic reactions, asthma episodes, infections, and other respiratory problems. Certain types of fungi can also cause structural damage to homes.
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- **HOW CAN I TELL IF I HAVE ELEVATED MOULD SPORES IN MY HOME OR OFFICE?** If you see mould growth you should look for the water or moisture source and try to stop or prevent it. By preventing an accumulation of moisture or water, you can eliminate most of the causes of mould growth. Where

there is minimal or no visible mould (fungal) growth, but there is a musty (organic) odor, the investigation of where it's coming from becomes a little more difficult.

Again look for any area of moisture. If there is a concern about elevated mould spores, then air sampling maybe required. A trained and experienced environmental consultant should do the test sampling necessary to provide a comprehensive analysis report of the existing condition results and the recommended remediation (removal) Scope of Work within specific areas. Sampling can also be very expensive. Depending on the environmental consultant, the rates for services can be expensive and should be “quoted” based on a site review or more specifically, an initial investigation report.

- **DOES IT MATTER WHAT KIND OF MOULD IS FOUND IN MY HOME?** The reaction to the amount and types of fungi in a home will vary from person to person. Some fungi (moulds) will produce mycotoxins, or toxins. Simply spraying a mildewcide on mould will not remove or inactivate the mycotoxins that have already been produced. Adverse reactions from dead mould or non-active mould spores can still happen. Not all fungi produce mycotoxins all the time. And it may take a lot of mould to produce enough of a dose of mycotoxin to produce a poison. The amount of mycotoxin required to create a reaction has not clearly been established. Tolerance to these mycotoxins again varies from person to person.
- **HOW MUCH MOULD DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE ME SICK?** It varies from person to person. For some it takes very little exposure to cause an adverse reaction. As a general rule, when you see fungal staining the suspected problem needs to be resolved and the mould removed.
- **ARE SOME PEOPLE AT GREATER RISK THAN OTHERS?** High levels of mould can be unhealthy for anyone inside a building. Those individuals that appear to be at higher risk are infants, elderly, immune compromised (those with HIV infection, liver disease or undergoing chemotherapy), pregnant women and individuals with existing respiratory conditions, such as allergies, multiple chemical sensitivity and asthma. If you have concerns about your health, you should consult a physician for advice.

At Healthy Homes IAQ, we conduct detailed site evaluations and testing as required to assist you in determining cause and solution to your IAQ concerns. Our comprehensive program is designed to teach you about IAQ and easy to apply preventative measures to make your home a Healthy Home. Give us a call and we'll provide you all the information you need to solve your IAQ issues.

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