

## What does my landlord have to do?

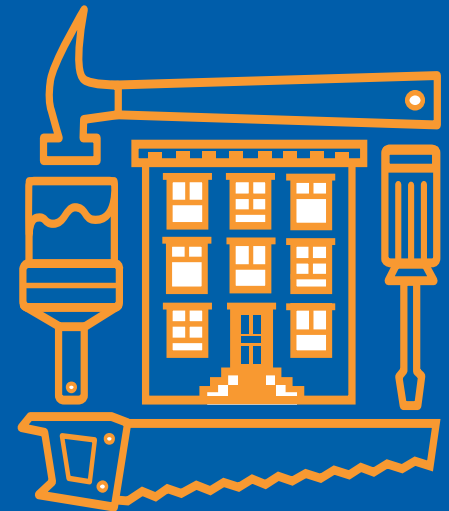
- Your landlord and building manager must keep your building in good condition so mold will not grow. This means repairing water leaks and correcting persistently high humidity levels.
- If you have a lot of mold (more than 10 square feet) or it keeps coming back after you have cleaned it, ask your landlord to fix the problem.
- If the problem isn't fixed, call 311.

## More Information

- The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Call 311, or visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health). Select 'M' in 'Health Topics A to Z' and click on 'Mold'.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) (type "mold" in the search box).

New York City Department  
of Health and Mental Hygiene  
253 Broadway, 4th Flr, Room 402, CN-34C  
New York, NY 10007

# FACTS ABOUT MOLD



# HEALTHY HOMES

## 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 in the United States and New York City.

## How do I recognize it?

- Mold can be many different colors. It may look furry, slimy, or powdery.
- Some mold has a musty, stale, or earthy odor.
- Mold usually grows in damp places, such as bathrooms and basements.

## What does mold need to 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.
- More severe reactions to mold may occur among workers exposed to large amounts of mold on the job, such as farmers working with moldy hay.

## Should I see a doctor if I have been exposed to mold?

- If you think that you or your children have symptoms related to mold exposure, you should see a doctor. Keep in mind that many symptoms associated with mold exposure are also caused by many other illnesses.

## How can mold be prevented?

- The best way is to remove water and moisture sources. Fixing leaks, drying damp areas, and removing humidity from the air (e.g., using a dehumidifier in basements; cracking a window while taking a shower in bathrooms with no exhaust ventilation) will help stop mold growth and keep it from coming back.

## How can I safely clean mold in my home?

- Use soap and water to clean small areas of mold (less than 10 square feet) on walls or other hard surfaces as soon as you see it.
  - Wear waterproof gloves.
  - Dry the cleaned area completely.
- If the mold returns quickly or spreads, there may be an underlying problem such as a water leak. To stop mold, water problems must be fixed.
- If large areas of mold are present, you may need a professional mold abatement company. Check the phone book for mold abatement contractors.

