

Mold Fact Sheet



What is mold?

Mold is a naturally occurring fungus that is found in the environment. It grows on plants, food, and even walls. While some mold (such as the ones responsible for producing cheese and penicillin) are beneficial, others may be a serious health threat. Molds produce microscopic cells called spores.

Where is mold?

Mold spores are present everywhere both outdoors and indoors and spread easily through the air.

How does it get in buildings?

Mold is present in all buildings. It is when mold levels inside exceed those outside that we say that there is a “mold problem”.



When is indoor mold considered a problem?

The most common “problem” mold in indoor environments is a black mold that grows in buildings when the right conditions are met. The right conditions are humidity levels of 60% or greater and temperatures of 75° F or greater.

When will mold grow inside a building?

Mold needs a food source, measurable moisture (measured by relative humidity) and mild to warm temperatures. The food source can be any organic material such as dust, books, papers, animal dander, soap scum, wood, particle board, paint, wallpaper, carpet, and upholstery. When such materials become and stay damp, especially in dark areas with poor air circulation, mold may grow.



Flooding, pipe leaks, leaky roofs, moisture in walls, high indoor humidity and poor heating/air-conditioning system design and operation can create the damp environment that mold needs to grow. If you can smell a musty odor or see mold, you may have a mold problem. If you suspect you have a mold problem, you should contact EHS for more information.

What drops from ventilation systems & when?

Sometimes in the spring, when the air conditioning systems switch from mainly heating to cooling, dust and fine debris including mold, which has built up in the cold ducts, falls out of the ceiling registers. This also occurs less frequently in the fall and when systems are serviced. During the summer months, the heating vents collect dust and fine debris while the heater is inactive.



When the first chill comes and the heater is activated after months of collecting dust and debris, employees may see some of this dust and debris fall from the ventilation system.

What is EHS's role?

EHS has highly trained, licensed, and experienced mold professionals who can come out and assess your area to determine if mold is present.

What is a mold assessment?

Mold assessments involve an inspection of a building area to evaluate whether mold growth is present and to what extent. Samples may be taken to determine the amount and types of mold that are present; however, sampling is not necessary in some cases.

What is mold remediation?

Mold remediation is the cleanup and removal of mold growth from surfaces and/or contents in a building. It also refers to actions taken to prevent mold from growing.

What can you do?

You can help inhibit the growth of mold in buildings and improve indoor air quality for all occupants by keeping humidity below 60%, reporting water leaks immediately, ensuring that your trash is put out regularly, and that food is stored in appropriate locations.

We can all do our part to ensure the health of UT's buildings for everyone!

Where can I get more information?

For more information about mold assessment and remediation, please call EHS at 512.471.3511.

***Pictures not taken from any buildings on campus or other University property.**