

## What can I do to Avoid Mold?

Mold cannot be avoided entirely.

Of the three conditions necessary for mold to develop (mold spores, moisture and a food source), moisture is the only one we can control.

To reduce the opportunities for mold to exist in your home or building, try to control moisture. Some (but not necessarily the only) strategies you can implement include:

- Follow ANSI & TCNA installation standards to avoid water intrusion that leads to mold.
- Maintain humidity to a range of 30 to 60 percent.
- Use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Cover crawlspaces.
- When leaks are identified, control them quickly.

## If I have Mold, how do I clean it?

- Determine the extent of the affected area. If the affected area is larger than 10 sq. ft., consult a professional.
- Use protective gloves and goggles, avoid contact with your skin.
- Clean the area with a combination of detergent or household cleaner and warm water.
- Rinse the area with clear water and dry completely.
- Discard the gloves and other cleaning materials after completion.



The Ceramic Tile Distributors Association (CTDA) is the international association of distributors, manufacturers and allied professionals of ceramic tile, stone and related products.

CTDA's mission is to provide educational and networking opportunities for distributors of ceramic tile and their suppliers to further the consumption of ceramic tile.

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This brochure is provided by CTDA as a public service. All information contained herein was obtained from one or more of the following sources:

**USEPA** – [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)  
**Responsible Solutions to Mold Coalition** –  
[www.responsible moldsolutions.org](http://www.responsible moldsolutions.org)  
**National Association of Home Builders** –  
[www.moldtips.com](http://www.moldtips.com)



Photos courtesy of: Howard Pryor of Conestoga Ceramic Tile Dist., Inc. and Laticrete International, Inc.

# CERAMIC TILE AND MOISTURE RESISTANT SYSTEMS CAN PREVENT

# MOLD



## What is Mold?

Mold is a fungus, a group of living organisms. Mold is part of our environment. Outdoors, it helps our ecosystem function by breaking down organic matter. Indoors it can cause health problems such as allergic reactions, skin irritation and more.

## Where does Mold come from?

Mold occurs naturally as part of our environment. Three conditions must be present for mold to exist and survive:

1. Mold spores
2. Moisture
3. A source for sustainability – a “food” source

If these three conditions are present, mold will form and grow.

## Why Should You Be Aware of Mold?

Mold can be an irritant, a nuisance and potentially a health risk for some people. You should be aware of mold to prevent it when possible and understand how to deal with it when necessary.



Research continues to determine the health effects of mold. However, current thinking is that for many people, mold is not a significant health risk.

Because molds produce allergens (substances which can cause allergic reactions in some individuals), molds can cause reactions in some people. Some reactions might include: sneezing, runny nose, red eyes and skin rash. Mold exposure can also irritate the eyes, skin, nose, throat and lungs of anyone.

Exposure to mold can trigger asthma attacks in people with asthma.

## Common Myths About Mold (Courtesy of the Responsible Solutions to Mold Coalition)

### 1. Mold grows only on paper, wood and other organic material.

Mold will grow on any surface, including glass, fiberglass and even steel. Mold needs three things to grow: 1) mold spores (which are almost always in the air); 2) moisture; and 3) a food source. Houses are constructed using a wide variety of organic materials; therefore, the only effective strategy to control mold is to control moisture.



### 2. Mold can be eliminated only in sterile environments.

We all benefit from some molds such as the species that led to the development of penicillin. Only “clean room” technologies, like those used in some hospitals – which are too expensive and unnecessary for the home or office – can control or minimize mold spores. Therefore, the only thing you can control in your home or office is moisture.

### 3. Only experts can clean mold.

Homeowners can clean small patches of mold using household detergents and warm water. After cleaning, rinsing and drying the spot where mold has grown, rubber gloves and cleaning cloths used in the process should be discarded. Larger patches of mold may need to be remediated by trained professionals.

### 4. Once mold starts, it will always be present.

Mold can be stopped in its tracks, but only if moisture is minimized or eliminated. Therefore, leaks should be corrected as soon as they become apparent. Building experts urge homeowners to be aware of some of the telltale signs of mold, which include dampness, odors, discoloration, peeling paint, condensation, compacted insulation and actual mold outbreaks.