MOLD

How can mold be prevented?

- ☑ Repair leaky plumbing pipes and fixtures
- ☑ Repair leaks in the building such as roof leaks or leaks along walls
- ☑ Prevent condensation by increasing air circulation, ventilation, or dehumidify. This is especially important in bathrooms and basements which generally have a higher humidity level. Insulating cold surfaces such as cold water pipes, will also help reduce condensation.
- ☑ Do not allow spots to stay damp or wet
- ☑ Ensure that water will properly drain away from your home's foundation by having the ground slope away from your home
- ☑ Keep the relative humidity inside your home below 60%. The ideal range is 30-50%.

How can I clean up mold?

Before cleaning up the mold, the source of moisture must be eliminated or mold will grow again. If you suffer from a chronic respiratory illness, do not clean up mold. When cleaning up mold, wear protective clothing that can be cleaned or discarded, wear rubber gloves & goggles, shut off HVAC systems to prevent the spreading of mold spores, and work over short time spans and get plenty of fresh air during breaks. If a large area has been contaminated with mold, it is a good idea to consult a professional. Different surfaces will require different steps to clean the mold. Porous materials such as carpeting or drywall, should be removed and replaced.

If the surface you have is a non-porous surface such as tile, you can use the following steps:

- First clean the surface with soap
    - use a non-ammonia soap or detergent in hot water (**do not** mix bleach with ammonia as the fumes are toxic)
    - use a stiff brush or cleaning pad on block walls or uneven surfaces
    - rinse with clean water
- Next disinfect the surface to help prevent mold from coming back
    - use a solution of water & bleach (1/2 cup of bleach per gallon of water); ensure you have proper ventilation
    - let the disinfectant air dry on the surface

In a situation where your home has been flooded, drywall should be removed up to about a foot above where the water level was and discarded. If there was insulation in the wall, all wet

insulation should also be removed and disposed of. The surfaces should then be disinfected and allowed to air dry before replacing materials.

Common Sources of Mold-Causing Moisture in the Home

- leaky roofs & gutters
- backed up sewers
- damp basements/crawl spaces
- clothes dryers vented indoors
- overflows from bathtubs/sinks
- steam from baths/showers not vented outdoors
- flood waters

Because it's virtually impossible to eliminate all mold spores in your environment, controlling the moisture present is the key to preventing mold growth. By taking the proper steps to prevent future mold from growing and cleaning up existing mold, you can help prevent potential health problems for you and your family.

"Toxic" Mold

The term "toxic" mold is sometimes used to describe molds that produce toxins called mycotoxins. This does not mean the the mold itself is toxic. The mycotoxins produced can cause adverse health effects. Some molds that are known to produce mycotoxins are *Aspergillus*, *Penicillium*, and *Stachybotrys*.

The above information was taken from the websites listed below. If you have other questions regarding mold please click on the links below or contact the Health Department.

- IDPH Mold and Your Health
- IDPH Common Questions About Mold
- IDPH Reducing Your Exposure to Mold
- IDPH Moisture in the Home
- IDPH Cleaning Up After Flood & Sewer Overflows
- CDC - Mold
- EPA - Mold
- FEMA - Removing Mold From Your Home