

WHAT IS MOLD?

Mold is a fungi that can be found both indoors and outdoors in all climates, during all seasons of the year. It is naturally present in almost every environment.

Mold is typically dark in color and grows best in a warm, moist, humid environment. Mold spreads and reproduces by releasing tiny spores that float through the air until landing in other locations. Mold spores can survive harsh environmental conditions that do not support normal mold growth, such as arid conditions.

HOW COMMON IS MOLD, INCLUDING THOSE COMMONLY CALLED TOXIC MOLDS, IN BUILDINGS?

Molds are very common in buildings and will grow anywhere indoors where there is moisture. The most common indoor molds are Cladosporium, Penicillium, Aspergillus and Alternaria. While Stachbotrys Chartarum (toxic mold) is less common than other mold species, it is not rare. The hazards presented by toxic molds are the same as other common molds that can grow in residence halls.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP PREVENT THE GROWTH OF MOLD IN MY ROOM?

Report any conditions that contribute to mold growth, such as water leaks, condensation, water infiltration or flooding, via FIXX online at www.housing.sc.edu/fixx.asp.

Steam from showers can create a moist environment. After your shower, pull the curtain closed so it can dry. Keep the door to the bathroom open after your shower so moisture can dissipate.

Do not put carpet in bathrooms.

Regular cleaning is important to remove the naturally occurring mold spores. You should wipe down hard surfaces (i.e. counters, shelves, toilets, mirrors, showers, tile floors) once a week using a common household cleaner or a mixture of water and white vinegar for a “greener” option. Vacuum carpets and clean floors often and wash both bed linens and window treatments regularly.

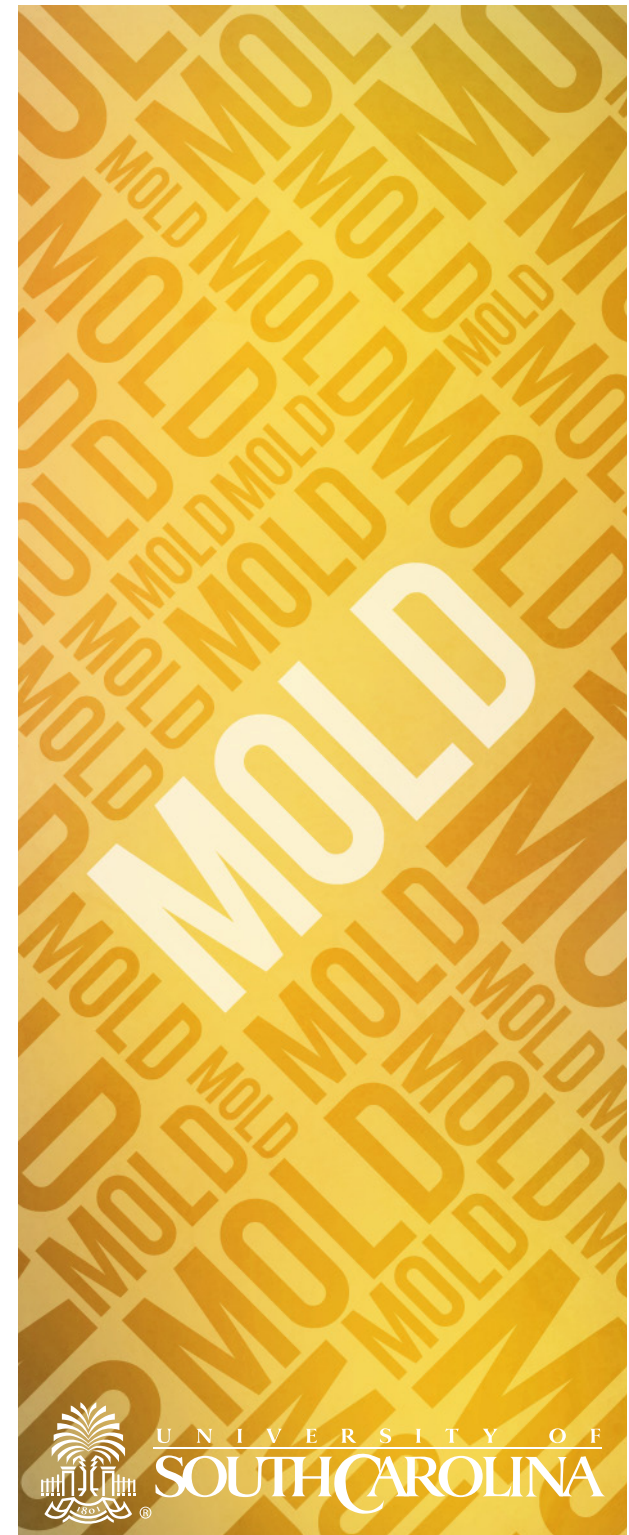
Use an air conditioner or dehumidifier whenever weather is humid.

Be sure your room has adequate ventilation, especially in bathrooms.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT MOLD IN MY RESIDENCE HALL?

There is always a little mold everywhere – in the air and on many surfaces. As the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have stated, there are no “mold-free” buildings. University Housing, Facilities Services and Environmental Health and Safety have developed mold remediation procedures consistent with guidelines provided by the EPA. In most cases, the remediation can be accomplished with our university staff; however, when necessary, outside contractors may be utilized.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A MOLD PROBLEM?

Large mold growths can usually be seen or smelled. They can be found indoors where humidity levels are high, such as basements or showers.



HOW DO YOU REMOVE MOLD FROM RESIDENCE HALLS?

In most cases, mold can be removed by a thorough cleaning with bleach and water. However, if carpet and wallboard is overrun with toxic mold, it is best remedied by removal and replacement.

In addition to immediate attention to any areas of our residence halls where mold is evident and visible, our renovation plans and scheduled maintenance plans include improvement to HVAC systems to reduce interior moisture/humidity levels which can contribute to excessive mold growth.

I HAVE SEEN MOLD, SMELLED MOLD OR SUSPECT THERE IS MOLD IN MY RESIDENCE HALL ROOM. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Please submit a work order via FIXX online at www.housing.sc.edu/fixx.asp to have the mold investigated. Appropriate custodial and maintenance measures will be taken to remedy the situation.

Generally, it is not necessary to identify the species of mold growing in a residence, and the CDC does not recommend routine sampling for molds. Since the susceptibility of individuals can vary greatly either because of the amount or type of mold or the individual's sensitivity to mold, sampling and culturing are not reliable in determining individuals' health risks.

WHAT IF I THINK I AM SICK FROM MOLD?

Some people are more sensitive to mold than others. For these people, exposure to molds can cause multiple symptoms including nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, wheezing or skin irritation.

Some people, such as those with serious allergies to molds, may have more severe reactions including fever and shortness of breath. Individuals with immune suppression may be at increased risk for infection from mold.

If you are feeling ill, you should immediately call the Thomson Student Health Center at 803-777-3175.