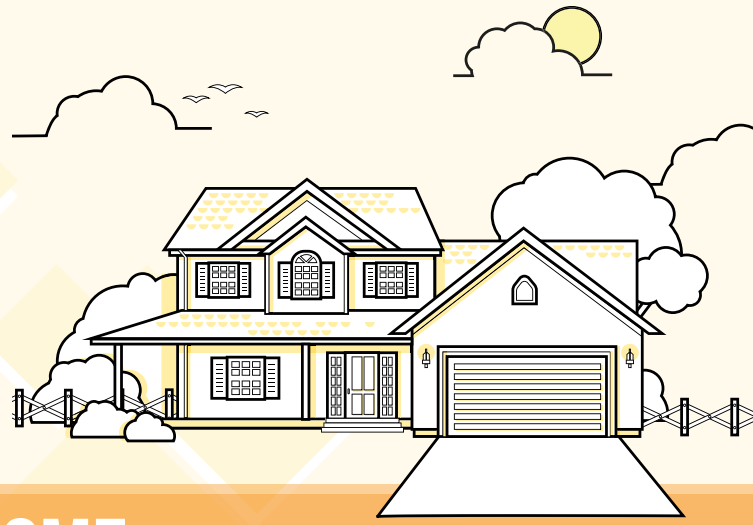


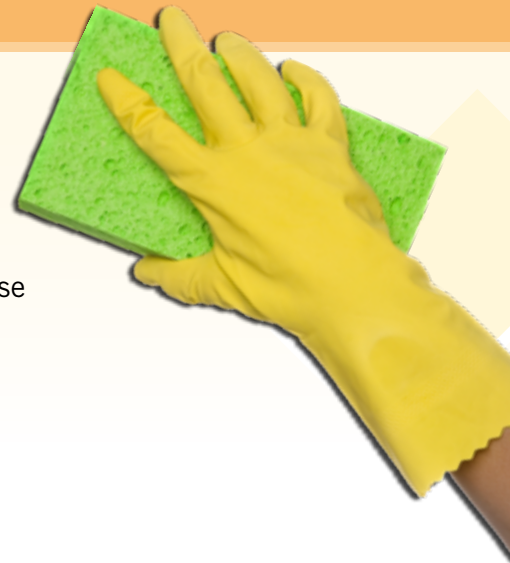
# Healthy Homes



## REMOVING MOLD IN YOUR HOME

Mold grows from spores, which are found naturally in the air and cannot be seen by the naked eye. Mold spores act like seeds, causing mold to grow under the right conditions. Mold itself is usually easy to detect. While testing is sometimes used to determine the presence of mold, it is generally not necessary or recommended. Usually a quick investigation with your eyes and nose can tell you if mold is present. Some common signs of mold include:

- Visible mold growth. Mold can appear in a variety of textures and colors; it often appears as a discoloration, stain, or fuzzy growth.
- Musty or earthy odor.
- Water damage and discoloration around an area.



Keep in mind that the first signs of mold might be the development of allergy-like symptoms. If you detect excess moisture or a musty odor, but do not see mold, be sure to check behind cabinets and wallpaper, and under carpeting. These are common hiding places for mold. Do a complete inspection of your home using the **UGA Mold and Moisture Checklist**, available at <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/>.

The key to controlling mold is to eliminate the source of the moisture problem.

## Mold Removal Steps

If you find that mold is growing in your home, you will need to take steps to clean the mold, stop its growth and eliminate it from your home. Taking the following steps will help remove it from your home.

### 1. Fixing the Moisture Problem:

Mold cannot grow without moisture. Listed below are some common causes and solutions to many household moisture problems.

- Roof and plumbing leaks should be repaired quickly.
- Overflow from tubs, toilets, or sinks needs to be cleaned up and dried out quickly.



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# How to Clean Specific Items

Mold can be removed from most items if you act quickly, clean the item and dry it quickly. If an item is expensive or has sentimental value you may want to consult with a specialist. This includes companies that work in fire and water damage restoration, rug and carpet cleaning, furniture repair, and textile and art restoration. Look for specialists who are affiliated with professional organizations.

Household Item	Impacts of Mold	Cleaning Process
<b>Clothing and Fabrics</b>	Mold can cause permanent damage to some items.	For washable items, pretreat stains with a non-ammonia detergent. Read the product label and wash at the hottest temperature with detergent and appropriate bleach (oxygen based for colors and delicates; chlorine for bleach-safe colorfast items). Repeat as many times as needed to remove mold and mildew smell. Dry thoroughly. Caution: Do not dry prior to removing any stains since heat can set the stain. Dry clean non-washable items.
<b>Carpeting, Rugs and Padding</b>	Mold can be avoided if carpet is dried out within 48 hours of getting wet. Moldy padding should always be discarded.	Use a water extraction vacuum to dry wet carpeting. Remove and replace saturated carpet padding. Accelerate the drying process by using fans and dehumidifiers, air conditioning or heaters. Professionally shampoo or sponge-clean moldy areas of carpet, using carpet cleaning products. Use hydrogen peroxide on stubborn stains; test first. If the mold persists, discard the item.
<b>Hard surface floors: Vinyl, Linoleum, Tile, Ceramic, Laminate, Wood</b>	May be cleanable unless water remains under the flooring where it can damage substrate or subfloor.	Surface mold on hard flooring may be vacuumed with a HEPA vacuum (do NOT use a standard vacuum) or removed with a damp mop and a solution of water and mild non-phosphate detergent. Scrub or strip floor finish, if necessary. Dry quickly and thoroughly, making sure the subfloor is dry.
<b>Ceiling Tiles</b>	Seldom salvageable if damaged by water and mold.	If the tiles show minimal mold growth, you may be able to clean them. Wear protective clothing and clean with a damp cloth and solution of water and mild non-phosphate detergent. Dry quickly. A stainblocker coating may be needed before repainting to prevent water stains from showing through.
<b>Drywall and other Wallboards</b>	Mold may not be visible, but may be growing in the wall cavity.	Dry it within 48 hours. If the wall insulation is wet, it must be removed and discarded to reduce the risk of wood decay. To clean, use a HEPA vacuum and wipe with non-phosphate detergent. Damage caused by sewage water should be disinfected using a bleach and water solution.
<b>Furniture - Hard-surfaced (wood, laminate, veneer, bamboo, steel, resin, etc.)</b>	Cleanable, but some items may be damaged.	Remove mold with a damp rag and solution of water and mild non-phosphate detergent. If the damage was caused by sewage water, disinfect using a bleach and water solution. Dry thoroughly in a well-ventilated location, but not in direct sunlight, which may cause it to warp.
<b>Upholstered Furniture and Mattresses</b>	Seldom salvageable if damaged by water and mold.	If the item has sentimental value or was in contact with clean water for less than a few hours, you may be able to restore it. Upholstered furniture can be stripped to the frame; the frame disinfected using the solution above; and then reupholstered after the frame is completely dry. It is a good idea to have mattresses sanitized by a professional.
<b>Leather Clothing and Furniture</b>	Salvageable if cleaned. Clean when mold growth is first noticed.	Use a soft bristled brush or clean cloth to brush the mold spores off. Clean with a solution of water and non-phosphate detergent. Wipe off soapy residue and dry thoroughly. Items may be wiped down with a 50/50 mixture of water and isopropyl alcohol. Dry thoroughly then use a leather conditioner.

# Removing Mold Caused by Flooding

Mold can start growing within 24 hours after a flood, so it is important to start drying the area out as quickly as possible. Before starting the cleanup work, take pictures of the damage and contact your insurance company. Some items may need to be discarded if they cannot be cleaned and dried completely within 24 to 48 hours. When cleaning be sure to wear personal protective equipment. This includes a N-95 or higher rated respirator, rubber gloves, and protective eyewear. Items should be cleaned with a barely damp cloth and a solution of water and mild non-phosphate detergent or cleaner. If the mold was caused by contaminated water, then the area should be disinfected with a solution of:

½ to 1 cup of household chlorine bleach  
1 gallon of water

Before using bleach, test the cleaning solution on an inconspicuous part of the item. If the surface could be damaged then use a milder disinfectant, such as hydrogen peroxide. Do not use bleach on metals or near the air conditioning system. After cleaning, provide lots of space around the item, and dry quickly using fans to circulate the air. Disinfectants can kill mold, but drying thoroughly is key to preventing new growth.

For more information, read the Homeowner's and Renter's Guide to Mold Cleanup After Disasters. ([https://www.cdc.gov/mold/pdfs/homeowners\\_and\\_renters\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/mold/pdfs/homeowners_and_renters_guide.pdf))

## SAFETY TIPS WHEN USING BLEACH

- Read the label carefully
- Never mix bleach with ammonia or acids such as vinegar or lemon juice
- Use in a well-ventilated area
- Do not use at full strength
- Wear protective gear

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