



## WHAT IS TOXIC MOULD

The term “mould” refers to a broad group of over 100,000 known microorganisms. Mould, also known in biology as “fungi”, occur naturally in the environment and play a vital role in the global ecosystem. Background levels of mould spores are nearly always present both outside and within buildings and do not pose a health hazard.

Toxic mould is defined as large concentrations of mould within a home or building, far in excess of background levels. Certain species of mould are more toxic than others.

## CAUSES OF TOXIC MOULD GROWTHS

Serious mould growth will not usually occur unless an environment develops within a home that is conducive to growth. Specifically, mould reproduces when there is an appropriate surface on which to colonize combined with sufficient moisture and heat. Water damage or humidity issues inside a home, often lead to mould growth.

### Materials Susceptible To Mould:

- Drywall, wall paper
- Wood, wood products
- Ceiling tiles, carpets
- Building contents
- + many other porous materials

## MOULD EXPOSURE AND YOU

Numerous studies and investigations have clearly demonstrated that exposure to toxic mould is a real and significant health hazard. The specific threat to human health is dependent on several variables including mould species, spore concentrations, building conditions, etc. Also, given identical exposure to the same variables within a building, different people will respond differently to exposure; with symptoms ranging from benign to life threatening.

### Exposure Symptoms

- Runny nose, eye irritation
- Nausea, flu-like symptoms
- Congestion, headaches
- Asthma aggravation
- + more serious conditions

### Who Is Most At Risk?

- Infants and children
- Pregnant women
- The Elderly
- Individuals with respiratory conditions
- Individuals with allergies
- Persons with weakened immune systems

## IDENTIFICATION OF TOXIC MOULD

If toxic mould is suspected, the first step is to perform a visual inspection. Often a visual inspection is sufficient to identify problem areas that require remediation. Other options for mould identification include surface sampling and air sampling. Sampling is conducted by a trained environmental consultant and analyzed by a laboratory.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

If toxic mould is suspected, the locations of the mould and source of any leaks should be identified either visually or through testing. Mould susceptible individuals should eliminate or reduce their exposure to the contaminated environment.

Medium to large scale mould cleaning should not be attempted by the homeowner. Improper techniques and equipment may lead to toxic spores contaminating the home and causing injury to the person doing the work. Toxic mould should be cleaned by a qualified environmental contractor.