



HOUSE FACTS NOTES

Summer 2005

SUMMER TIME HOME TIPS FROM UPSTATE HOME INSPECTION

TGI.....SUMMER!

The warm weather is bringing us outdoors. However, summer weather can increase the growth of unhealthy and burdensome mold indoors. Mold can cause health problems, and damage to your home if left untreated. Fortunately, mold in small doses can be nothing more than a minor inconvenience.

The EPA recommends that indoor relative humidity remain below 60 percent (ideally between 30 and 50 percent). While there is nothing we can do about the humidity outside, it is important to keep the levels low inside your home, as mold requires moisture to grow. This means that the following areas in your home (which are consistently wet or humid) are most likely to promote growth.

- The bathroom-generally above the shower, and occurs more often if the bathroom is un-vented.
- The basement- above/around a boiler or hot water heater.
- The laundry room-if the exhaust from dryers is not vented outside.

GOOD NEWS! Prevention is easy.

Controlling the moisture levels in your home will help prevent the growth of mold.

- The best and easiest way to prevent the growth of mold in your home is to use a dehumidifier-available at most home improvement stores.
- Clean indoor water leaks or spills immediately. Wet or damp materials which are cleaned and dried within 48 hours of the leak or spill generally will not yield mold growth.
- Clean and repair roof gutters regularly.
- Test the relative humidity levels in your home regularly. Small, inexpensive moisture/humidity meters are available at most hardware stores.
- Turn on fan, or open windows in the bathroom during and after showering.
- Keep air conditioning drip pans clean and the drain lines unobstructed and flowing properly.
- Make sure that the ground surrounding the foundation of your home slopes downward and away from the home, so that water does not enter or collect at the base.



FOLLOW YOUR NOSE!

If your house smells moldy or musty, there may be "Hidden Mold" in your home. This is mold that is not visible by looking around the home-behind wall paper, on pipes behind walls, behind ceiling tiles, inside duct-work- and other hard to see places.

Rely on your nose! If you suspect mold is growing, you're probably right.

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BAD NEWS:

Left unattended, mold can lead to potential health problems and potential home problems.

Health Problems:

The bad news about indoor mold is that if left undetected and allowed to grow, it can lead to potential health problems. Mold produces allergens, which are then inhaled, and can cause allergy-like symptoms such as:

- Sneezing, runny nose, red eyes
- Wheezing, respiratory infections
- Sore throat, headache

**These symptoms can occur in everyone, but certain people are more susceptible to the adverse effects, including infants, children, people who have allergies, people with asthma, seniors, and those with weakened immune systems. Talk to your doctor about your individual symptoms.*

Home Damage:

As a homeowner, you should also be aware that:

- Large-scale mold problems are likely to occur when there has been an on-going water leak or flood, and spores have multiplied, and moved to other areas in your home.
- Mold damages what it grows on. The longer it grows the more damage it can cause.
- When wood becomes wet and not dried, it can warp and cause walls to crack or become weaker.
- Mold may also be responsible for discoloration and cracking walls.

We recommend doing a monthly check for mold in your home, and always check for the existence of mold prior to selling your home, so that there are no costly surprises before you sell.

With Upstate Home Inspection's Home Health Care Program, we will check your home for the existence of mold during our annual "check-up," Contact us at 518.365.0920 or via email at dosborn@upstateinspection.com for more details.



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Help! There is mold in my house!!!

If you've found mold in your home, don't panic. Small amounts of mold are common, and you can fix the problem



yourself. The EPA suggests using the size of the moldy area to determine whether you fix the problem yourself, or you hire a professional. Their guidelines suggest that if the moldy area is less than 10 square feet (3'x 3' patch) you can remove and repair the problem yourself.

Guidelines for removing mold:

- Fix any plumbing leaks and other water problems immediately. Dry all items completely.
- Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water, and dry completely.
- Disinfect the area with bleach or other cleanser.
- Bag any moldy materials for disposal.
- Avoid exposing yourself to mold by wearing long sleeved shirts, goggles and gloves.

If you are unsure about how to clean an item, or if the moldy area is large, consult a specialist.

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