

FIGHTING THE FUNGUS AMONG US

The National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) part of the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention), suggests a common-sense approach to molds: (1) Take routine measures to prevent mold growth, and (2) remove mold promptly with a thorough cleaning. Inspect your home for evidence of water damage and visible mold, then promptly correct the conditions that cause mold to grow (leaks, condensation, water infiltration, etc.). According to the NCEH, all molds appearing in small quantities on visible surfaces inside a home can be cleaned with a mild water and chlorine bleach mixture.

Controlling moisture

- Detect and repair any water leaks.
- Put a plastic cover over the dirt in crawlspaces to prevent ground moisture from entering your home.
- Ventilate crawlspaces, basements and attics.
- Use exhaust fans in kitchens and bathrooms to remove moisture.
- Make sure your clothes dryer is vented to the outside.
- Turn off appliances, such as humidifiers or kerosene heaters. if you see moisture forming on windows or other surfaces.
- Use dehumidifiers and air conditioners, especially in hot, humid climates, to reduce moisture in the air.
- Periodically check and empty air conditioner and refrigerator drip pans.
- Do not wet your home's exterior walls with sprinklers for an extended time.
- Do no pile wood or debris in crawl spaces or next to your home.

Cleaning Mold

- Clean mold with a non-ammonia detergent or commercial fungicidal cleanser, then disinfect with a bleach and water solution (about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bleach per gallon of water). Avoid mixing bleach with products containing ammonia.
- Do not simply cover mold with caulk, paint, varnish, stain, etc.
- Clean or replace moldy shower curtains.
- Dampen dry mold to avoid the spread of spores.
- Wear gloves and a dust mask.
- Vent the room to the outside while cleaning.