



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS MOLD DECISION-MAKING - MOLD ALLERGIES/SYMPTOMS

I am an Allergy sufferer who has recently been tested and found to be allergic to mold. I have all the classic allergy symptoms, such as sneezing, stuffy/runny nose, itchy/watery eyes, etc. My symptoms are sometimes worse when I am at work.

Allergic reactions to mold are the most common health effects of mold. As mold grows it releases spores into the air. These spores, much like pollen, once inhaled cause allergy symptoms which can vary from person to person. As a long term allergy sufferer who is also allergic to mold I recommend a 4 prong approach:

1. **Allergy proof your house** - AET's Tip of the Month "A Dozen Tips to Allergy Proof your House" found on our website www.aetinc.biz under Newsletters lists common sense and cost effective things you can do in this regard. I am also a strong believer in using wet disinfecting wipes to clean frequently touched surfaces (such as phones, keyboards, table tops, etc.) for bacteria.
2. **Limit your outdoor activity time** - Mold levels outdoors are at least 100 times higher than indoors. Check daily pollen and mold counts and limit time/exercise outdoors accordingly. Keep doors/windows closed when cutting grass, landscaping and during/after rain storms and damp conditions at night and early mornings (high mold times).
3. **Have your place of business or residence inspected/assessed for mold** - Mold growth is controlled indoors by controlling moisture. Do either of these locations have a history of water leak or flooding? Are there signs of staining or discoloration on floors, walls or ceilings? How clean are the building surfaces? What is the frequency of cleaning and maintenance of the HVAC system? Are musty odors present? Mold growth may also be hidden beneath carpeting, on the back side of wall paper, and behind drywall or paneling.

Have your residence or business professionally inspected. Incorporate mold spore air quality sampling into the inspection to assess mold spore levels indoors vs. outdoors. Where indoor mold spore levels exceed outdoors or where a specific type of mold exceeds indoors to outdoors, mold growth may be occurring.

4. **Consult your allergist** - Determine if your allergies are seasonal, in colder climates mold can be found in the outdoor air starting in late winter and peaking in late summer to early fall (July to October). In warmer climates mold spores may be found throughout the year with the highest levels in the late summer to the early fall months. While indoor mold can occur year round, indoor mold levels are higher when outdoor mold levels are also higher. Use medications as needed and directed by your allergist.

Conclusion: As an allergy sufferer on a daily basis I make personal decisions regarding my outdoor activities, my symptoms and my medication usage. However, mold can also produce toxins and is also linked to worsening of asthma symptoms in people who have asthma. People with compromised immune systems or those with chronic lung disease can also develop serious infections. Mold is also linked to hypersensitivity pneumonitis (similar to pneumonia) in susceptible individuals after brief or prolonged exposure. Mold growth indoors can be controlled.

When you need professional mold advice email Alan Sutherland, CIH, CHMM at a.sutherland@aetinc.biz or call 610-891-0114. We provide nationwide services; phone consultations are free. Check out the full range of environmental contracting/consulting services on our website www.aetinc.biz.