



North Country Insurance Co.

MOLD – A prevention guide

Mold is defined by the Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary as the following:

- 1. A superficial often wooly growth produced on damp or decaying organic matter or on living organisms**
- 2. A fungus that produces mold.**

Sounds pretty disgusting, doesn't it? Keep in mind that mold spores travel through the air, then settle on a moist area and reproduce. It can also cause health problems, including allergies, asthma attacks and irritation of the nose, eyes, lungs, throat and skin. In addition, uncontrolled mold can damage your home and belongings, causing thousands of dollars in damage and repair costs.

Now that you know all this, think about your home for a moment. Do you have any of this fungus growing anywhere? Whether you do or don't, here are steps to prevent and/or remove mold from your home before it gets out of hand.

- * Regularly inspect your home, paying careful attention to the following areas:

Bathroom	Kitchen	Laundry Room
Utility room	Attic	Basement
Plumbing	Air conditioners	Walls
Roof	Gutters	Doors & windows

- * Keep the humidity level in your home as low as possible by:

- Properly vent your appliances (dryers, stoves, and heaters)**
- Use a de-humidifier**
- Run fans and exhausts when showering, cooking, etc.**
- Open windows whenever possible**
- Insulate cold pipes to reduce condensation**
- Repair and maintain seals around windows and doors**

- * Look outside your home – the ground should slope away from the foundation of your house so that water does not collect in foundation walls and in the basement
- * If you find mold, attempt to clean it with detergent and water. Scrub the area, rinse, and then dry completely. If you leave any moisture, the chances are high that the mold will grow back. You may not be able to remove it all on your own, so when in doubt call a professional. Mold does not come out of everything, especially ceiling tiles and carpet, so you may have to do some replacement work.

While we have attempted to provide you with a basic overview of mold and some good steps to take, you may find some helpful information on the Environmental Protection Agency's website, www.epa.gov, or call the EPA Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse at 1-800-438-4318.