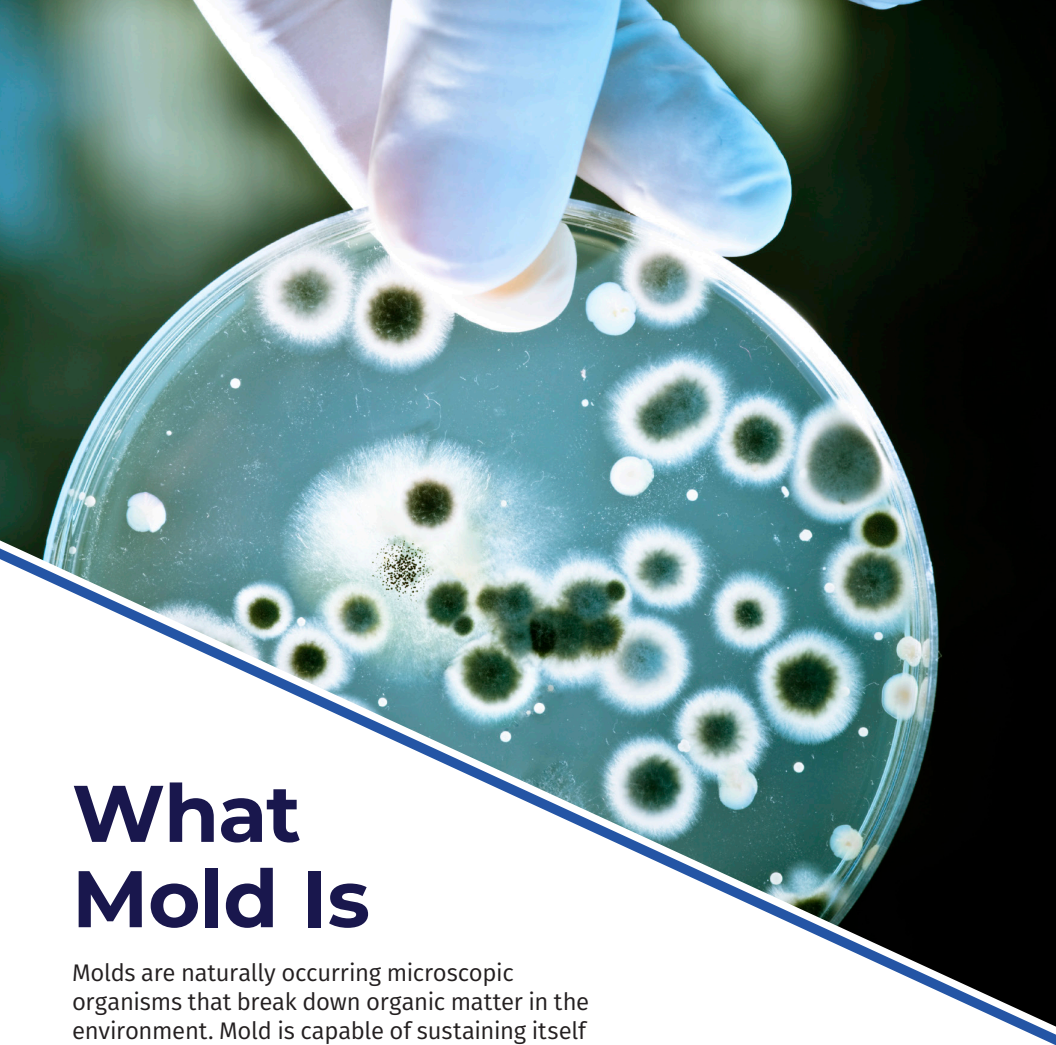




# Mold 101

prevention, identification and  
procedure for mold in your  
north haven communities home





# What Mold Is

Molds are naturally occurring microscopic organisms that break down organic matter in the environment. Mold is capable of sustaining itself anywhere there is moisture and a food source such as wood, wallpaper, upholstery, dust, etc. Mold spores (like plant pollen) are spread through the air and are commonly transported by shoes, clothing and pets. Mold is found virtually everywhere in our environment; both indoors and outdoors and in both new and old structures. There are over 100,000 species of mold with less than 500 of those species (0.5%) classified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as human pathogens. There are currently no legal limits established for sampling to determine if the level of mold in a building or home is acceptable or not. Nevertheless, appropriate precautions need to be taken.

# Excess Moisture



Since mold thrives in moist environments, it is important to prevent excessive moisture buildup in your home. Failure to promptly report leaks or remove moisture buildup on home surfaces can encourage mold growth. Common sources of excess moisture include:

- Air conditioning temperature set too low, creating condensation on windows
- Leaving windows open with the air conditioning on
- Rainwater leaking from roofs, windows, doors, outside walls or the foundation
- Overflows from showers, bathtubs, toilets, lavatories, sinks, washing machines, dehumidifiers or refrigerators
- Leaks from plumbing lines, fixtures or dryer discharge vents
- Not properly ventilating bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms
- Steam-cleaning carpets and not extracting most of the water
- Spills on soft surfaces that aren't cleaned immediately to include plant watering overflows, pet urine, cooking and beverage spills
- Wet towels or laundry left on floors or carpets
- Overflowing air conditioning drip pans or condensation lines

Immediately notify the North Haven Maintenance Department at 907-290-5214 if you discover a leak or suspect water intrusion of any kind in your home.

# Preventing Mold Begins With You

Minimize the potential for mold growth in your North Haven Communities home by:

## CLEAN YOUR HOME REGULARLY

- Regular vacuuming, mopping and cleaning is important to remove the household dirt and debris that creates an environment supportive of mold growth. Use household cleaners on hard surfaces and flooring when possible.
- Immediately dispose of moldy food.
- When you see mold/mildew accumulating on household surfaces, immediately remove it using a mixture of soap and water. The EPA also recommends cleaning products such as Lysol Disinfectant, Clorox Cleanup or Tilex Mildew Remover as options.

## REMOVE VISIBLE MOISTURE ACCUMULATION

- Remove moisture on windows, walls, ceilings, floors, registers and other indoor surfaces as soon as reasonably possible. Pay particular attention to bathrooms, the kitchen and the laundry room where moisture commonly accumulates.

## INSPECT YOUR HOME

- Check your home for damage to the roof and siding, as well as clogged gutters or standing water against the home after heavy rain or strong winds for sources of water intrusion.
- Inspect washing machine hoses and discharge lines for signs of leaks or moisture accumulation.
- Inspect your utility closet regularly. Ensure it is dust and debris free.

## REPORT FLOODING

- If you experience an appliance or plumbing overflow (shower, bathtub, toilet, lavatory, sink, washing machine, dehumidifier, dishwasher, hot water heater, air conditioner, refrigerator, etc.) take steps to stop the flooding and immediately notify the Maintenance Department. Even if you consider the overflow minor, notify the maintenance team so they can inspect the area to ensure moisture is not trapped in the flooring or walls.
- Completely dry out or dispose of any materials affected by the flooding to include rugs, furniture, toys, etc.

## **REPORT SIGNS OF WATER DAMAGE OR LEAKS IMMEDIATELY**

- If you notice signs of water leaking from roofs, windows, doors, outside walls, plumbing lines, fixtures, dryer vents or the foundation of your home, immediately notify the Maintenance Department.
- Report overflowing air conditioning drip pans or condensation lines.
- Report signs of water leaking into walls from bad grouting or caulking around showers, tubs or sinks.

## **MAINTAIN YOURN AIR CONDITIONING & HEATING SYSTEM**

- Promptly notify the Maintenance Department about any heating problems you encounter.
- Always leave your heating system set at 68 degrees or higher in the fall/ winter and when you are on vacation.
- Leave ceiling fans on low to keep air circulating throughout the home. This will control the amount of humidity inside the home and can prevent water intrusion in the form of burst pipes.

## **FOLLOW THESE ADDITIONAL TIPS**

- Regularly run the ceiling fans in your home to keep air circulating.
- Turn on exhaust fans in the bathroom and kitchen before showering or cooking. Keep the fan running for several minutes after you finish.

- When showering, keep the shower curtain inside the tub or fully close the shower door.
- After showering, wipe moisture off of shower walls, shower doors, bathtubs, and bathroom floors. Leave the bathroom door open until all moisture on the mirrors and bathroom walls has dissipated. Hang towels and bath mats so they will completely dry.
- Humidifier use can contribute to excess moisture buildup and mold growth.
- When using a sprinkler to water your lawn, ensure the stream is not hitting your home.



# Is Mold Going to Make Me Sick?



Not necessarily. Just because mold or mildew is present does not mean it will make you sick. According to the CDC, less than 500 of the 100,000 mold species have been described as human pathogens. That is less than 0.5 percent. Individual factors such as general health, age and pre-existing conditions contribute to how susceptible a person is to mold as an allergen. Only your medical provider can determine if an allergy to a specific mold exists the same way they would determine if you are allergic to dogs, oak pollen or grass. If you feel you may have an allergy, visit your medical provider.

Additionally, there are many environmental causes other than mold that can act as respiratory irritants, including:

- Pet dander
- Local pollen
- Household dust
- Household cleaning products
- Scented candles
- Air fresheners
- Tobacco smoke

# Resources

More information about mold is readily available at reputable sites, including:

- Centers for Disease Control, Environmental Health: <http://www.cdc.gov/mold/>
- Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/mold/>

# Compliance

Complying with this information will help prevent mold and mildew growth in your home. Immediately notify the Maintenance Department at 907-290-5214 if you discover a leak, suspect water intrusion of any kind or discover mold in your home. Remember, North Haven can only address problems in your home that we are aware of. If you have questions regarding this information, please contact a Community Representative at 907-318-6542. If you fail to comply with this information, you can be held responsible for property damage to the home.

Thank you for helping us keep our North Haven family healthy and happy.

Sincerely,

North Haven Communities

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