

DID YOU KNOW??

HOW DO MOLDS GET THEIR FOOD?

Molds carry their stomachs on the outside, unlike people who digest food on the inside.

Molds digest food by producing enzymes outside of their cells. The enzymes break down foods in their environment into small molecules, and then the mold brings back the molecules into its cells for continued digestion and energy. This is the opposite of what people do - we eat foods from outside of our bodies, and the enzymes to break the food down are inside of our stomach.

This is how molds rot things like wood - they literally digest their way through the material!

Sources:

<http://www.seps.org/cvoracle/faq/mold.html>

Illinois Department of Public Health, Mold and Mildew Brochure. 8/03.



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MOLD
THE BASICS



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MOLD –THE BASICS

Molds are a form of fungus, and are found almost everywhere, inside and outside, including on plants and dry leaves. They can be nearly any color—white, orange, green or black. Molds are good for the environment because they break down dead material. Mold spores travel easily through the air.

Most surfaces can be good places for mold to grow and live. When mold spores land on material that is damp, for example, wall, floors, and carpet—they can begin to multiply. When molds are present in large numbers, they may cause allergic symptoms similar to those caused by plant pollens, and people may begin to feel sick.



Moldy Bread

WHAT DOES MOLD NEED TO GROW?

- A food source - such as leaves, paper, wood, or dirt
- A source of moisture

HOW CAN I BE EXPOSED TO MOLDS?

You are exposed to some mold every day, usually by touching, eating, or breathing it. When mold is growing on a surface, spores can be released into the air where they can easily be inhaled. A person who ingests or inhales a large number of spores may become sick from the mold.

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT MOLD IN MY HOME?

When airborne mold spores are present in large numbers, they can cause skin irritation, allergic reactions, asthma episodes, and breathing problems in some people. Being exposed to a lot of mold spores can cause a person to

Moldy Strawberry



become allergic to mold. Mold can also cause damage to your home.

HOW DO I KNOW IF THERE IS MOLD IN MY HOME?

If you can see mold or there is a moldy, musty smell in your home, there is mold in your home. It does not need to be tested, it just needs to be cleaned up. The most important thing to do, when cleaning up mold, is to remove any moisture from the area, or the mold will come back.

HOW DO I CLEAN MOLDY SURFACES?

Contact a professional if more than 30 square feet are moldy. Otherwise, clean surfaces with detergent or soap in hot water, and rinse. To prevent mold from coming back, disinfect area with a diluted bleach solution. See <http://www.epa.gov/mold/> for more details.