

MOLD-PROOF YOUR HOME: USE THIS CHECKLIST

Mold can turn up in nooks and crannies of our homes where we'd never think to look. Following the strategies below will increase the odds of keeping your home relatively mold-free.

While there is no practical way to eliminate *all* mold and mold spores in your home, the best way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture. Most people know to take basic steps to reduce humidity, such as running a bathroom fan or opening a window when showering and cleaning and repairing roof gutters regularly, but other steps are less obvious.

Use this checklist for other key steps you may not be aware of...

- ✓ **Maintain indoor humidity levels of less than 50%.** You can measure humidity levels with a device called a *hygrometer*, which can be purchased in a hardware store or online for less than \$20. If necessary, use a dehumidifier to keep humidity levels in check.
- ✓ **Keep houseplants to a minimum**—they increase humidity, and mold grows on their soil.
- ✓ **Put an air purifier with a HEPA filter in rooms you spend the most time in** to remove mold spores from the air.
- ✓ **Vent appliances that produce moisture**—such as dryers, stoves and kerosene heaters—to the outside.
- ✓ **Use exhaust fans** when cooking, dishwashing or cleaning.
- ✓ **Check bathroom towels and mats (especially nonskid ones) for mold**, and wash these items frequently.
- ✓ **Replace cracked grout near your bathtub or shower.** It is an ideal area for mold to grow. Do *not* paint or caulk over cracked grout. Replace it and cover it with a waterproof sealant.
- ✓ **Put insulation on cold surfaces**—such as exterior walls, floors and windows—to reduce condensation.
- ✓ **Keep air-conditioning drip pans clean** and drain lines unobstructed and flowing properly.
- ✓ **Fix all leaks as soon as possible.**

Source: Richard Firshein, DO, director and founder of Firshein Center for Integrative Medicine in New York City, and author of several books, including *Reversing Asthma*, *Your Asthma-Free Child*, *The Nutraceutical Revolution* and *The Vitamin Prescription (for Life)*. FirsheinCenter.com