

IAQ Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can you test my home for mold?

A: RAPCA follows the US EPA guidelines for mold, and US EPA does not recommend testing for mold. If you can see or smell mold, you already know you have a mold problem. If you test for mold, you will find mold, because mold is always in the air. Mold is a problem inside when water goes where it should not be. There are no regulations to say how much mold in a home is safe, so test results cannot help you know if you have a mold problem. If the water problem is fixed and all moldy items are fixed, mold problems will be fixed, too.

Q: Can you inspect my home for mold?

A: RAPCA can look at your home to find mold and other indoor air quality problems, but will not do any testing. A form with RAPCA's findings and recommendations will be given to the tenant and landlord. All recommendations are based on U.S. EPA guidelines.

Q: Can you make my landlord clean up a mold problem?

A: There are no regulations for inside mold, so RAPCA cannot make a building owner clean up mold or fix any building issues. RAPCA can only give recommendations on how to clean the mold. The tenant and the landlord must decide the best way to fix things.

Q: Can black mold make me sick?

A: Any type or color of mold might cause an allergic reaction in a person who is sensitive. If you are worried about any health symptoms, you should see your doctor. Even if no one in your home is having health symptoms from mold, U.S. EPA and RAPCA still recommend fixing mold problems. Being around mold for a long time might cause you to have mold allergies or asthma.

Q: How do I clean up mold?

A: Soft materials, like paper, cardboard, clothes, stuffed animals, pillows, mattresses, and soft furniture, must be thrown away. Metal, glass, concrete, and some plastics can usually be cleaned. Ceiling tile, carpet padding, drywall, and insulation should be thrown away and replaced. Ceramic tiles and wood can be cleaned. If you have cleaned what can be cleaned, and thrown away things that cannot be cleaned, you have taken care of the mold damage. To keep mold from coming back, the water problem must be fixed. U.S. EPA and RAPCA do not recommend using bleach to clean mold. Bleach has a strong smell that can bother your lungs, skin, and eyes. Soap and water will remove mold from most items and is safer to use.

Q: Why is mold growing in my home?

A: Mold grows when water goes where it should not be. This could be from a pipe leak, a roof leak, or any other water problem in a building. Water issues could be caused by a quick problem, like a toilet

overflow, or a problem that has been ignored, like a small toilet leak. Mold is always in the air, but you only have a mold problem when you have a water problem. If you fix the water problem, you can fix the mold problem.

Q: How long does it take mold to grow?

A: Mold can begin to grow after one or two days of something being wet. If the water problem is fixed and things are dried out within one or two days, you can usually stop mold from growing.

Q: Why does the mold keep growing back, even after it's been cleaned?

A: If you've cleaned the mold but it grows back, the water problem that caused the mold has not been fixed. You need to find the water problem and fix it, or the mold will keep growing.

Q: Why can't you make my landlord fix the mold problem?

A: There are no regulations to say how much mold in a building is safe, so RAPCA cannot make a landlord fix a mold problem. RAPCA recommends landlords follow U.S. EPA guidelines, which say mold should not be growing in a house. If mold is in a house, it should be cleaned up and the water problem should be fixed.

Q: Is black mold the only kind of mold I should worry about?

A: Any type of mold might cause health symptoms if you are sensitive. This is why RAPCA recommends cleaning up mold, even if no one is sick right now. People who don't have mold allergies now could develop mold allergies if they are around mold for a long time. Mold can also cause asthma, and can bother people with asthma or other breathing problems.