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## ***MOLD TESTING***

Molds are simple, microscopic organisms whose purpose in the ecosystem is to break down dead materials. Mold can be found on plants, dry leaves, and on just about every other organic material. Some molds are useful, such as those used to make antibiotics and cheese. Some molds are known to be highly toxic when ingested, such as the types that invade grains and peanuts. Most of the mold found indoors comes from outdoors. Molds reproduce by very tiny particles called spores. The spores float in on the air currents and find a suitable spot to grow. Spores are very lightweight and can travel on air currents. If mold spores land on a suitable surface, they will begin to grow. It is usually these mold spores that cause allergic reactions. Molds need three things to thrive - moisture, food and a surface to grow on. Molds can be seen throughout the house, and can be found in most bathrooms. Mold growth can often be seen in the form of discoloration, and can be many colors - white, orange, pink, blue, green, black or brown. When molds are present in large quantities (called colonies) they can cause health problems in some people.

Molds spores can cause adverse reactions, much like pollen from plants. Mold spores cause health problems when they become airborne and are inhaled in large quantities. Everyone is exposed to mold in some concentration in the outdoor air. Indoor exposure to molds is not healthy for anyone. In particular, people with allergies, existing respiratory conditions or suppressed immune systems are especially susceptible to health problems from mold exposure. Additionally, infants and children, pregnant women and the elderly can be sensitive to the effects of mold exposure. Some molds are more hazardous than others. For some people, a small number of mold spores can cause health problems. For others, it may take many more.

Is sampling for mold needed? In most cases, if visible mold growth is present, sampling is unnecessary. Since no EPA or other federal limits have been set for mold or mold spores, sampling cannot be used to check a building's compliance with federal mold standards. Surface sampling may be useful to determine if an area has been adequately cleaned or remediated. Sampling for mold should be conducted by professionals who have specific experience in designing mold sampling protocols, sampling methods, and interpreting results. Sample analysis should follow analytical methods recommended by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH), or other professional organizations.

Costs for a Mold test range from \$125-\$750.