

How can you avoid moulds 🍄?

Moulds are prevalent throughout our environment. The following measures will help minimise contact with moulds.

Avoiding Indoor moulds

- 🕒 Moulds flourish in damp environments, therefore one of the best ways to prevent their growth is ventilation.
- 🕒 Thorough cleaning of the kitchen, bathroom and utility room with subsequent ventilation of these areas will help prevent mould growth.
- 🕒 Open windows and close internal kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking, showering or bathing to prevent steam entering other rooms. Keep bathroom surfaces dry.
- 🕒 Do not let food decay. Clean and thoroughly dry problem areas such as refrigerator seals.
- 🕒 Clean mould from window frames and dry condensation.
- 🕒 Do not hang clothes in damp cupboards or pack clothes too tightly in wardrobes. Leave wardrobe doors ajar to ventilate the clothes.
- 🕒 Keep houseplants to a minimum and change the soil regularly.
- 🕒 Remove piles of old newspaper.

Avoiding outdoor moulds

- 🕒 Do not spend time in buildings where hay or grain is stored.
- 🕒 Do not go into damp and musty buildings.
- 🕒 Do not walk in mild damp conditions or among rotting leaves.

What preventive measures can you take 🍄?

- 🕒 Allergy bedding covers protect you from mould spores within the mattress, pillows and duvets.
- 🕒 Filter facemasks, like those worn by cyclists, trap spores.
- 🕒 Mechanical ventilation systems can remove spores.
- 🕒 Chemical solutions are available which eradicate moulds and deter their growth on windows, bathrooms and refrigerators and their frequent use is recommended.

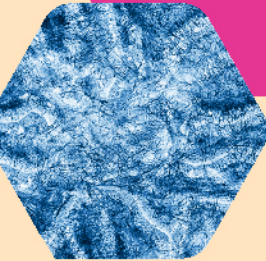
What is the treatment for Mould allergy 🍄?

Antihistamines, decongestants, corticosteroid nasal sprays can be useful. If these do not work your doctor may suggest allergen immunotherapy.

Allergen Immunotherapy could provide long lasting benefit. You can "train" your immune system not to react exaggerated to an allergen anymore. This is done through a series of allergy shots called Immunotherapy. One to two weekly shots expose you to very small doses of the allergen, that causes an allergic reaction. The dose is gradually increased, usually during a three to six months period. Maintenance shots are needed every four weeks for three to five years. Immunotherapy is usually used when other treatments like antisymptomatic medication are not satisfactory.

Mould facts 🍄

1. Moulds may live indoors or outdoors and thrives in damp, warm, and humid environments.
2. Although shower stalls and basements are typical moist areas prone to the growth of moulds, any moist area in the home may harbour mould.
3. Allergic reactions to mould are the most common health effects of mould.
4. The best way to prevent mould in the home is the control of moisture.



ALLERGY & IMMUNO THERAPY CLINIC

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Mould Allergy



What is an allergy 🍄?

An allergy refers to an exaggerated reaction by our immune system in response to exposure to certain foreign substances. It is exaggerated because these foreign substances are usually seen by the body as harmless and no response occurs in non allergic people. In allergic individuals, the body recognizes the foreign substance as harmful and one arm of the immune system generates a response.

What causes an allergy 🍄?

Allergy-producing substances are called "allergens." Examples of allergens include house dust mites, pollens, moulds, animal proteins, foods and even medications.

To understand the language of allergy, it is important to remember that allergens are substances that are foreign to the body and can cause an allergic reaction in certain people. When an allergic individual comes in contact with an allergen, the immune system mounts a response through the IgE antibody. Therefore, people who are prone to allergies are said to be allergic or "atopic."

What is Mould allergy 🍄?

If you have allergy symptoms year-round or if they get worse in damp weather - you may be allergic to moulds. Moulds live everywhere, and disturbing a mould source can disperse the spores into the air.

What are Moulds 🍄?

Moulds are tiny fungi whose spores float through the air. They like damp environments and need four things to grow: food, air, appropriate temperature and water.

Mould spores are not visible to the naked eye, but by the time mould is visible on an object, literally millions of spores are present. Mould has both an urban and rural presence, and an indoor and outdoor presence.

Where are Moulds commonly found 🍄?

Moulds favour damp, musty conditions; therefore piles of rotting leaves, grass cuttings, compost heaps, and garden sheds are prime environments for mould growth. Indoor moulds can be found on food that is getting spoilt, such as the black and white fur that is found on cheese, bread, fruit and vegetables.

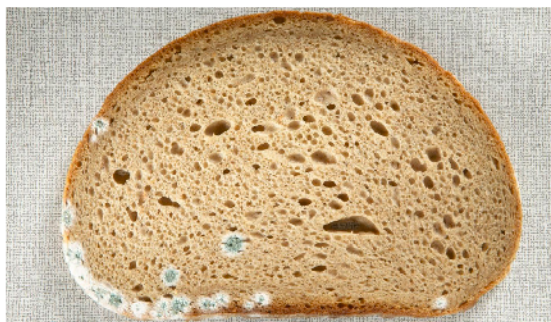
The refrigerator is a key mould environment if not adequately cleaned and dried, particularly around the seal. Other types of mould can be found on window frames, especially when there is a lot of condensation on the windows, under wallpaper and on the soil of houseplants. Likewise, the damp environment caused by tumble dryers and baths and showers make the kitchen and bathroom danger zones.

Moulds release spores and these spores may cause allergic reactions in people.

When is it not an allergy 🍄?

Although mould allergy is the most common problem caused by exposure to mould, mould can cause illness without an allergic reaction. Mould can also cause infections or irritant and toxic reactions. Infections caused by mould can lead to a variety of problems from flu-like symptoms to skin infections and even pneumonia.

An irritant reaction is caused when substances from moulds called volatile organic compounds irritate the mucous membranes in the body. Symptoms of an irritant reaction are similar to an allergy and include eye irritation, runny nose, cough, hoarseness, headache and skin irritation.



Which Moulds cause allergy 🍄?

There are hundreds of types of moulds, but not all of them are responsible for causing allergy symptoms. The most common allergy-causing moulds include Alternaria, Aspergillus, Cladosporium and Penicillium.

The two common moulds seen in India are:

- 🕒 **Alternaria Alternata** - Is found in soils, foodstuffs and textiles. Black spots on tomatoes and other foods are attributed to this mould. This is generally considered to be an outside mould and appears when conditions are warm.
- 🕒 **Aspergillus Fumigatus** - is found in soils, leaf and plant litter, decaying vegetables and roots, bird droppings, tobacco and stored sweet potatoes. This mould is associated with asthma, also with bronchitis and conditions such as Farmer's lung.

What are the risk factors to develop Mould allergy 🍄?

A number of factors can make you more likely to develop a mould allergy, or worsen your existing mould allergy symptoms, including:

- 🕒 **Having a family history of allergies.**
- 🕒 **Working in an occupation that exposes you to mould.** Examples include farming, dairy work, logging, baking, millwork, carpentry, winemaking and furniture repair.
- 🕒 **Living in a house with high humidity.** If your indoor humidity is higher than 60 percent, you may have increased exposure to mould in your home.

🕒 **Working or living in a building that has been exposed to excess moisture.** Examples include leaky pipes, water seepage during rainstorms and flood damage.

🕒 **Living in a house with poor ventilation.** Tight window and door seals may trap moisture indoors and prevent proper ventilation, creating ideal conditions for mould growth. Damp areas, such as bathrooms, kitchens and basements, are most vulnerable.

What are the symptoms 🍄?

The symptoms of mould allergy are very similar to the symptoms of other allergies.

Mould allergy symptoms can include:

- 🕒 Sneezing
- 🕒 Runny or stuffy nose
- 🕒 Cough and postnasal drip
- 🕒 Itchy eyes, nose and throat
- 🕒 Watery eyes

Some people with mould allergies may have allergy symptoms the entire summer because of outdoor moulds or year-round if symptoms are due to indoor moulds.

Mould spores can deposit on the lining of the nose and cause hay fever symptoms. They also can reach the lungs, to cause asthma or another serious illness called allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis.

Sometimes the reaction is immediate, and sometimes the reaction is delayed. Symptoms often worsen in a damp or mouldy room such as a basement; this may suggest mould allergy.

How is Mould allergy diagnosed 🍄?

To diagnose an allergy to mould or fungi, the doctor will take a complete medical history. If mould allergy is suspected, the doctor often will do skin tests.

A skin prick test can find out whether you have antibodies that react to a specific allergen.

Skin prick test.

The skin prick test involves:

- 🕒 Placing a small amount of substances that may be causing your symptoms on the skin, most often on the forearm, only in exceptional cases the skin of the prostrate back can be used as an alternative.
- 🕒 The skin is then pricked so the allergen goes under the skin's surface.
- 🕒 The healthcare provider closely watches the skin for swelling and redness or other signs of a reaction. Results are usually seen within 15 to 20 minutes..

Extracts of different types of fungi will be used to scratch or prick the skin. If there is no reaction, allergy is not suggested. In some people with allergy, irritation alone can cause a reaction. Therefore the doctor uses the patient's medical history, the skin testing results, and the physical examination combined to diagnose mould allergy.