



A healthy home is dry

A dry home reduces mold and pests

The main idea

A home with too much moisture encourages mold and pests to live and grow. Both mold and pests can damage your belongings and cause various health problems.

How it affects your health

Mold may make breathing problems worse, especially for people with asthma, allergies to mold, and respiratory illnesses (such as lung infections). Pests can carry diseases and trigger asthma attacks.

How to know if you have a problem

- Leaking or dripping pipes; water droplets (condensation) on cold windows
- Water stains or damage; warping or rotting wood; peeling, blistering, or cracking paint
- Clogged gutters, plugged downspouts, or cracks in the foundation
- Mold that you see (often as speckled patches, in any color) or smell (musty or earthy), especially in
 - Bathrooms (under sinks or around pipes, and on walls, ceilings, or shower curtains) and kitchens (under sinks or around pipes, under a refrigerator, and in cabinets)
 - Damp basements, closets, and laundry areas
 - Areas where there have been leaks or water damage

How to fix the problem

- Find the sources of moisture, such as leaks inside and outside the home, and repair them
- Clean up water and other spills right away
- Use exhaust fans or open windows in the bathroom after showering or bathing and in the kitchen when cooking
- Clean downspouts and gutters, and make sure that water drains away from the home
- If you see or smell mold, it should be cleaned up promptly
 - It is usually not necessary to test to learn whether you have mold or to learn the type of mold
 - Consider hiring a trained professional if the moldy area is large, if the damage was caused by contaminated water, if the mold is hidden in walls or ceilings, or if you have asthma, severe allergies to mold, or a weak immune system
 - Clean up small moldy areas by scrubbing away mold on hard surfaces with soap and water (bleach is not necessary)
- Throw out soaked materials, such as carpets, that have been wet for more than 24-48 hours

How to learn more

- Connecticut Department of Public Health, “Mold in the Home: Health Concerns,” www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/mold_in_the_home_5-10.pdf
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home*: www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html
- Oregon State University Extension Service, “Home Moisture Problems,” <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/ec/ec1437.pdf>



For more information, call the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s Healthy Homes Initiative at 860-509-7299, see www.ct.gov/dph/healthyhomes, or call Infoline at 2-1-1