



## ***Mold Allergy***

Molds are microscopic fungi and their growth is encouraged by warmth and high humidity. Most molds are found primarily outside the home where they exist in the soil and on decaying plant matter. They can occur inside the home in areas of dampness and are a bigger problem in older homes, homes on pier and beam foundations directly over damp soil or buildings that utilize water-cooling units. Molds reproduce by releasing airborne spores year round and on any given day mold spores are far more prevalent than pollen grains. Inhalation by allergic individuals can then cause nasal symptoms or asthma. Because molds are predominately outside allergens avoidance measures must be aimed at both limiting indoor growth and limiting egress of mold spores into the home.

### **Recommended Measures to Decrease Mold Allergen Levels**

*~ in order of importance ~*

#### ***Control of Source Throughout the House***

- Keep humidity below 50% if possible.
- If humidifiers are used in winter, clean with bleach weekly or expose to ultraviolet light.
- Clean all visible mold and mildew. Dry carpet immediately when wet.
- House plants are not a major source of mold, but avoid dampness/standing water.
- Check for leaks under all water sources, roof/attic and correct drainage around the house.
- Avoid live Christmas trees.
- Use HEPA filters on air conditioners or HEPA room air cleaner.

#### ***In the Bedroom and Bathroom***

- Encase mattress/pillows in allergen impermeable cover and wash bedding weekly.
- Avoid foam rubber pillows/mattresses. Remove items from bed unless washed monthly.
- Use moisture removers in closets or dark storage spaces. Do not carpet bathroom.
- Utilize exhaust fans when showering. Clean shower/curtain, tub and tiles regularly.

#### ***Outdoors and Other Environments***

- Use well fitting particle mask during exposure to cut grass, leaf raking, soil, compost piles, sandboxes, hay, fertilizer and barns.
- Avoid camping or walking in the woods where mold spores are prevalent.
- Mold counts can be high on either dry windy days or after a rainfall.
- Greenhouses, antique shops, old furniture, saunas, sleeping bags, lake houses, hotel rooms and even automobile air conditioners can all be sources of increased mold exposure.