

Is black mold really black?

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NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, March 15, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Black mold. Dah-dah-dah-dum! These words (black mold) can quickly cue trouble ahead. It sounds ominous and evokes pretty scary images. However, the term "Black Mold" was invented by the news media to sensationalize mold problems, but it's actually not very accurate. The two most toxigenic molds are called "Stachybotrys" and "Aspergillus Fumigatus" and neither species is black. The former is olive to greenish-black and the latter is brownish in color and in scientific circles they're referred to as "potentially toxigenic molds." The emphasis is on "potentially."



What is black mold?

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Darryl Morris

Toxic or non-toxic mold? What’s the deal?

The term “toxic” when applied to mold is somewhat misleading. Why? It implies that certain molds are toxic, when in fact all molds are capable of producing secondary substances or metabolites that produce toxins. The correct terminology is mycotoxins or in layman’s terms—potentially toxigenic molds. Under certain growth and environmental conditions these molds are capable of eliciting a negative health response in humans and animals. And, while a specific mold such as Stachybotrys might have the potential to produce mycotoxins, if the environmental conditions are appropriate, it will not.

Creating a non-toxic mold environment

Potentially toxigenic molds thrive on moisture. They could become problematic as a result of any of the below:

- Basement water intrusion
- Chronic relative humidity
- Damaged coolant line insulation
- A damp crawlspace
- Excessive moisture in your HVAC
- Flooding
- [Ice damming issues \(the result of excessive attic heat\)](#)

- Sump pump failure
- Sewer back-up
- Stagnant water
- Water damaged carpet
- Fabric and compromised construction material

In addition, if you have or are considering purchasing a foreclosure or vacant property, there's a chance that toxigenic molds are present. It's not the end of the world. You just need to [test for it](#). It's important to determine that your indoor environment doesn't pose any serious health risks.

In the meantime, here are some things you can do to reduce moisture in your home and stop potentially toxigenic molds in their tracks:

- (1) If overall humidity levels are high, consider routine use of a dehumidifier and monitor your moisture levels closely. You may also want to purchase a hygrometer. (Cost estimate is \$25-\$30.) This will tell you when too much moisture is in the air. Mold grows when humidity levels surpass 60 percent.
- (2) Have your furnace checked by a professional HVAC contractor.
- (3) Adjust downspouts to ensure that water flows away from the home. It's also a good idea to grade the earth away from the home and extend the downspouts 8-10' away from the foundation.
- (4) During the winter, keep the indoor temperature at a minimum to reduce future ice damming. Ceiling fans should be reversed to reduce warm air from rising. Additionally, consider using roof and gutter de-icing cables.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. You can find many more tips for how to avoid potentially toxigenic mold in [the Mold Code Digital Mini Handbook](#).

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