

# Rental Properties

## Facts about mould

### What is mould?

- Mould (mildew), mushrooms, and yeast are all types of fungi. Fungi are found both indoors and outdoors.
- Many different kinds of mould may be found in Queensland and Australia in general.

### How do I know it's mould?

- Mould can be many different colours. It may look furry, slimy, or powdery.
- Some mould has a musty, stale, or earthy odour.
- Mould usually grows in damp places, such as bathrooms and basements.

### How does mould grow?

- Mould needs water and food. It can grow almost anywhere there is water, high humidity, or damp conditions.
- Mould grows faster in warm temperatures and high humidity.
- Mould can feed on paper, fabric, wallpaper glue, sheetrock, wood, soap scum, leather, and many other surfaces.

### How are people exposed to mould?

- You can breathe in mould particles if mould is disturbed or damaged.
- You can also breathe in tiny spores (similar to seeds) that mould may release into the air.
- You can touch mould and get it on your skin.
- You can swallow mould if you eat mouldy or spoiled food.

### What are the health effects of mould?

- Some people are allergic to moulds.
- Mould exposure may cause or worsen asthma symptoms, hay fever, or other allergies.
- The most common symptoms of mould exposure are cough, congestion, runny nose, and trouble breathing. Symptoms usually disappear after the mould contamination is removed.
- More severe reactions to mould may occur among workers exposed to large amounts of mould on the job, such as farmers working with mouldy hay.

### Should I see a doctor if I have been exposed to mould?

If you think that you or your children have symptoms related to mould exposure, you should see a doctor. Keep in mind that many symptoms associated with mould exposure are also caused by many other illnesses.

### How can mould be prevented?

The best way is to remove water and moisture sources. Fixing leaks, drying damp areas, and removing humidity from the air (e.g., using a dehumidifier in basements; opening a window while taking a shower in bathrooms with no exhaust ventilation) will help stop mould growth and keep it from coming back.

### How can I safely clean mould in my home?

- Use soap and water to clean small areas of mould (less than one square metre) on walls or other hard surfaces as soon as you see it.
- Wear waterproof gloves.
- Dry the cleaned area completely.
- If the mould returns quickly or spreads, there may be an underlying problem such as a water leak. To stop mould, water problems must be fixed.
- If large areas of mould are present, you may need a professional mould abatement company. Check the phone book for mould abatement contractors.

### What does my landlord have to do?

- Your landlord or building manager must keep your building in good condition so mould will not grow. This means repairing water leaks and correcting persistently high humidity levels.
- If you have a lot of mould (more than one square metre) or it keeps coming back after you have cleaned it, contact your landlord about the problem.

Source: New York City Department of Health.

For further information on this topic,  
please contact Council.

For more information, contact your local Council