

Featured In

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Real Estate Insider

What to do about mold – is it really a problem?



With rain in the forecast, mold could soon be a growing problem in homes across Long Island.

"If an environment stays wet for 48 hours, mold will grow," says Glen Apfelbaum, President of **Home Healthy Homes** on Long Island. "This is the time of year that you should be checking for plumbing leaks, getting the dehumidifier going, getting the a/c going, and keeping humidity below 50 percent."

What Causes Mold to Form?

The key to controlling mold is moisture control – not an easy task when you're surrounded by water on all sides, including underground streams.

"There's no such thing as a mold-free environment in a home. Nobody has zero mold," Apfelbaum says. The moisture that causes mold to grow in our homes generally comes from three different sources, Apfelbaum says. They include high humidity (especially in basements during the summer months), as well as plumbing and foundation leaks.

Dehumidifiers will help prevent mold from forming – if you turn them on in time. "A lot of people are very slow to turn dehumidifiers on or to clean up a water problem," Apfelbaum says.

A Health Risk

Mold is certainly unsightly. For one thing, it turns sheetrock black. But it's also unhealthy for the people who live in your home, especially children. "With pediatric sinusitis and asthma, among the main culprits are moldy homes," Apfelbaum says. He classifies the three types of mold found in the

home as allergenic, pathogenic and toxic. Although news reports often focus on toxic mold, allergenic mold is also a major problem.

"People tend to dismiss allergenic mold, but it's really something that has to be dealt with because it can make you miserable," Apfelbaum says.

Keeping Household Mold in Check:

- Turn dehumidifiers on early in the season, as soon as May.
- Make sure your dehumidifier is properly rated for the space.
- Buy a humidity monitor to ensure humidity remains at 50 percent or less.
- Ask a professional to take swab and air samples in an area suspected of having a mold problem.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

If you suspect that mold is a problem in your home, for advice, visit epa.gov.