



MOLD ALLERGY

The results of history and testing indicate that mold allergy is an important part of the cause of your allergic symptoms. Molds are a form of living plant life, which are widely distributed. Hundreds of varieties are known and certain of these are of great importance in allergy. In temperate climates, molds are the most abundant natural particles in outdoor air. Relative humidities over 40% enhance mold growth. “Showers” of mold particles may occur on warm, windy, rain-free days. High mold concentrations in air can also occur during and after rainfall. In general, molds cannot be completely avoided, but marked reductions in exposure can be made.

1. Avoid excess exposure to dust from farms, overgrown fields and pastures. Use a dust mask when cutting grass, clearing brush, spreading mulch or raking leaves. Avoid excessive houseplants and keep them out of the bedroom. Do not store firewood indoors.
2. Use dehumidifiers in damp basements and crawl spaces. Check drainage in basements and lower levels of homes on cement slabs to make sure surfaces are kept as dry as possible. Shower stalls, bathrooms and windowsills may require special attention using fungicides. Avoid using appliances that contain stagnant fluids, including cool mist vaporizers unless they are cleaned daily. If using a humidifier during winter months, keep humidity less than 40%, change water frequently and clean the reservoir daily.
3. Fungicides can be used by direct application.
 - A. Direct application
 1. Lysol (phenolated disinfectant) can be used as a spray or solution for application on surfaces where mold can grow.
 2. Clorox (sodium hypochlorite 5.25%) diluted 1 to 10 in water may be used as a surface disinfectant.
 3. Zephiran concentrate (benzalkonium chloride 12.5%) diluted 1 to 10 in water may also be used for surface application or as a spray for mold control.
4. Allergy injections benefit carefully selected patients who are mold sensitive.

Molds in foods do not usually cause allergic symptoms. Reactions to the ingestion of molds are for the most part chemical in nature, for example, due to toxins causing neurological symptoms (mushroom poisoning and psychological reactions) and dilation of blood vessels from non-allergic histamine release after drinking red wine (headache).

Sensitivity to molds, such as penicillium, has no clinical relationship to penicillin allergy.