



I THINK I HAVE MOLD IN MY HOUSE! DO I NEED REMEDIATION?

Chances are you don't. Mold remediation means *remodeling* or *reconstruction*-- tearing out materials and replacing them. Mold residue is physically removed, and new materials are installed. Sometimes remediation is the reasonable course to take when the wall or ceiling is so damaged by **water**--and the resulting mold--that existing materials are unusable. But if your home doesn't look like these pictures, chances are you do not need to undertake expensive remediation.



And it is expensive, typically thousands of dollars. It may be worth it to you if you really need it.

But there are alternatives, easier and a lot cheaper--for example, cleaning affected areas with anti-microbial solutions. How do you

know whether to go with remediation? You may be surprised to learn that there are no specific requirements to determine whether you need remediation. But there are

rules of thumb. They're really common sense.

When Is Remediation Recommended?

1. Is the visible mold (in total) more than 10 square feet? That's slightly more than 3 feet by 3 feet—a pretty big area when you think about it.
2. Is the material (wall, ceiling, paneling) “wet”—does it register more than 18% relative moisture level on a sensitive professional moisture meter?
3. Is any visible or airborne mold in the *Stachybotrys* family? This is often called the “black mold” or the “toxic mold?” This type of mold generates “mycotoxins” that can cause severe reactions in infants and sensitive adults.

How Can I Tell If My House Fits These Criteria?

Except for the 10 square feet measure, you can't. You need professional help. Moisture measurements must be taken with an advanced meter by someone who is experienced in using it. Then an accredited microbiological laboratory needs to analyze what is in your home, and help determine the extent of the problem. Once this is done, a course of action can be laid out. It can range from “clean it yourself” to remediation.

This is called a “mold screening.” That's what we do. Here are some basics.



Screening for Moisture

Moisture--unwanted moisture--is the key to mold. If you have mold, you have a moisture problem. Mold is the result, not the cause. The unwanted moisture needs to be tracked to its source and eliminated. Then you can worry about mold clean-up. How do you measure moisture? With equipment called a moisture meter used by an experienced professional. Here's one. While it looks simple to use, it takes experience to determine if the meter is responding to actual moisture inside a wall, and not metal pipes, metal drywall corner bead, etc.)Your inspector will know the difference.



What Kind of Mold Is It?

Only a microbiological lab can distinguish what types of mold may be in your house, because there are more than 80,000 different types that could be floating about in the outside air and inside air, as well. Only a few have been shown to be potentially harmful.

How do you get information to the lab? Samples. These may be samples of visible mold collected on a sterile swab.



Or they can be samples of the air in the house, collected with a powerful pump in a collection device such as the Zefon Air-O-Cell cassette.



Typically, the screening requires 3 days. One day for on-site inspection, moisture studies and taking samples. The samples are then expressed to the lab. Within 48 hours, the lab analysis is back, and your report is prepared, explaining the findings and presenting a recommended course of action.

How Do I Get Started?

One phone call: if you have questions or concerns about possible mold in your home, or if you are contemplating remediation, then a mold screening is in order. It's quick, and the cost is small. Best of all, it provides peace of mind. Just pick up the phone and call 800-532-9547 or 202-558-8781 and we'll set an appointment.

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