

What is Next...

...after the mold "happens" to you and your home

By Dan Howard
for TRIB TOTAL MEDIA

This year, April Showers Bring....Well... May, June and July Showers. This has been a year of way too much rain water. For some it has resulted in flooding. For others it has simply been leakage into their homes. The end result is more green plants outside in our yards and more mold inside of homes.

If you are wondering if you have mold because there is a musty odor, you probably do have it. Things that are not healthy for us usually do not smell, taste or feel good. No matter what you call it, if it smells bad, it is probably not healthy for us.

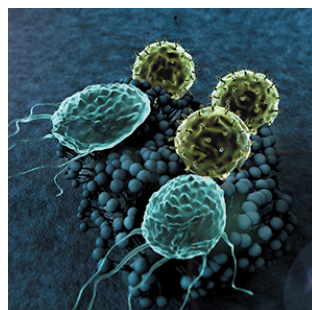


The Top 6 Questions of Homeowners Suspecting Mold



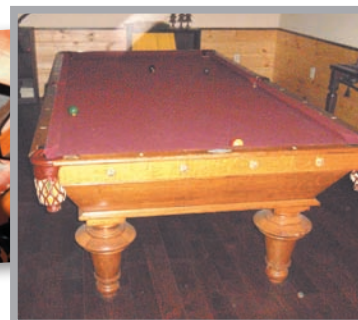
What type of mold do I have?

Modern technology allows us to do mold testing that can tell us the amount and type of mold in a building. Air testing is the most common and useful method, but there are other possible tests.



Why is mold there?

Why mold is in a home is usually a complicated set of issues. There are usually multiple causes of mold in any building where it is found. It can be condensation, improper ventilation, faulty roof yard and basement drainage. Hidden leaks, defective HVAC installation and elevated humidity are also some of many possibilities.



This pool table was in the basement of a \$750,000 home



How can it affect my health?

There are many studies and resources to tell us how mold can affect our health. That effect is highly individual, but we can see correlations that are helpful when entrusted to medical practitioners. Some molds can trigger chronic conditions like Asthma. Others may trigger anything from neurological conditions to eye infections.



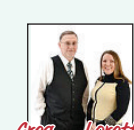
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Kittanning Boro

Vintage charm abounds in this 4 BR brick home. The original WW is intact complete with pocket doors & built in cabinets in the dining room. The 3rd level is a large finished entertaining area w/a ceramic tile topped bar. There is a full BA upstairs & also a handicap accessible powder room on the main level. Home also provides a spacious foyer, covered front porch, fenced in yard & off-street parking.

\$75,000



Ford City Boro

This is a 2 unit home that could be turned into a single family 4 bedroom home or keep separated into 2 units. Lots of updates done to each side. Live on one side and have tenants pay your mortgage on the other.

ML#1067953 \$64,900



Dayton Boro

his is as close to being in the country and still being in a Borough, with all public amenities, partially remodeled kitchen, new bath on the second floor, just move in and enjoy the summer! Room for a country garden, see horse and buggy go by.

ML#1054834 \$65,900



Kittanning Boro

Convenient town living in this beautifully maintained, move-in condition. 3 bedroom w/1 car attached garage & extra off street parking. Bathroom is completely updated, open kitchen & dining area w/ french doors leading to a fenced in backyard.

ML#1052006 \$99,900



Kittanning Boro

This home offers privacy, a lg yard & convenience all in one prime property. Solid brick ranch with 1 car int. grg w/just one flight of stairs to main floor living. Views of Kittanning from the kitchen, sun porch, master bedroom & new covered composite back deck. Large living & dining combination makes a wonderful entertaining space. Numerous closets & basement provide more than adequate storage space.

ML#1040208 \$159,900



Rural-Valley Boro

Large 4 bedroom house, had been a bed and breakfast, but currently rented. Owner suite on the first floor with access to a rear deck and outside large front entry foyer and more. All public utilities installed.

ML#1037038 \$79,900

ML#1028269



How can I make it go away and keep it from coming back?

Hiring a professional specializing in environmental assessments may answer the questions and save money for the homeowner by addressing the home as a whole. Having an environmental consultant determine the source of the problem, suggesting treatment options and content questions may save money and provide peace of mind.

Hiring a professional specializing in environmental assessments may answer the questions...



Do I have Insurance Coverage?

The answer to that question is "that depends." The first thing you should do is read your individual policy. Some insurance companies offer fairly good coverage for mold. Many other insurance companies have limits or exclusions for mold.

The key to obtaining mold coverage is understanding that there are policies that cover mold consequential to a covered loss. In English, that means if something like a pipe breaks and you get mold, it could be covered. If the mold is because your basement walls leak when it rains, it's probably not covered.

Flood damage is generally not covered unless you have "Flood Insurance." You may find it interesting that according to a piece of literature just received from Travelers Insurance, 25% of flood claims occur outside of flood areas.

Go to: www.envirospect.info/FloodMold for links and sources for information in the article.

Dan Howard is the owner of EnviroSpect. For environmental consultation call 724-443-6653. For more information visit their website at www.EnviroSpect.com Email questions to: Dan@EnviroSpect.com. Facebook or connect @DanHoward251.

The #1 Top Question from Homeowners Suspecting Mold is...

Drum roll please!

What happens to my "stuff"?

What you Can Clean after Flood or Mold Problems and What Needs Thrown Out?

Items that have a financial or sentimental value, makes this an important question. Our possessions are often very important to most of us.

The short story is if it is porous and moldy it will probably need thrown away. This includes cardboard, carpet, padding, stuffed animals and upholstered furnishings. Mattresses and box springs are on that list.

Most paper products including books will need thrown out once moldy or wet from flooding. For very valuable items such as a family bible, there is an expensive, but effective freeze drying process that can preserve those items.

Small appliances that have been exposed to mold will need replaced. The cost of cleaning some of these items will often exceed the cost of replacement. Failure to clean these can result in recontamination of the home.

Food items that have been in con-

tact or stored in areas with mold should be thrown away.

Materials that have a solid surface such as plastic, glass or metal are easily cleaned and preserved. Soap and water is the simplest cleaning method. A mixture of 1/2 cup of Clorox to a gallon of water is a great way to disinfect the hard surfaced materials. Do not use a higher concentration of Clorox as it can result in injury to people, pets and the items the mixture contacts.

Clothing is readily saved by washing in regular laundry detergent unless the fabric has been damaged. Mold will clean out of cloth material, but damaged clothing is not restored to its original condition by washing.

The paper materials that did not get wet or damp and do not have visible mold or damaged may be preserved with simply HEPA vacuuming.

Appliances that have some mold exposure but have not been under water may be saved with a professional cleaning. The exception can be electronics of appliances that can be damaged by mold. These

may require a professional cleaning. Consult a professional about these items. As an example a hard drive may be removed from a computer and salvaged, but could be damaged if powered on.

Forced air furnaces can distribute mold through an entire home. These need addressed as a part of any mold remediation.

Mold can and will live behind walls. Removal of house wall finishes may be required to get rid of the mold. If you do this work yourself, learn and follow the principles of containment, negative air and air scrubbing.

Any handling of mold contaminated materials should be done with personal protective equipment such as gloves, eye protection and masks.

There are materials used in the construction of homes that will require replacement as opposed to cleaning. Fiberboard is one such example. That material is used in construction as well as in some HVAC ductwork. Insulation is another common example.

So, Here We Are!

It has been a wet summer and flooding and mold have been a serious problem in most of the country. Look at what you need to do to protect your home and possessions and do it as soon as you can.

When doing the work yourself, consulting a professional for issues beyond your comfort zone or background can be a bargain.



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Lower Burrell

Newer roof and furnace with A/C in this lovely 3 bedroom split. Great neighborhood. Bar in the finished basement with a sink, 2 car garage AND plenty of off street parking in the paved drive. Yard offers a grassy area and a hard surface for the kids to ride bikes away from the street. Plaster walls and stove and fridge included. Ready for you to move right in and make it your own.

Stephanie Oswald
\$154,900



Natrona Heights

Centrally located! Close to 28 exwy, and in walking distance to schools. This home offers first flr master with potential for full bath, oversized livingroom with a fp, eat in kitchen with lots of space, and an add'l room set up as a kitchen but could easily be converted to 4th bedroom/office/ playroom. Nice lvl lot, partially fenced for a garden plus a storage shed! A little TLC can make this house your home.

724.996.6139
MLS#1061299

Brenda Berger
\$75,000



Jefferson Township

WELCOME! To this warm and cozy home in a beautiful country setting with a new roof that was replaced in 2014. Huge deck and level back yard and nice shaded front yard. Awesome wet bar that has a copper counter top in the game room which is in the finished basement. Mstr BR has a wood fp with his and her closets and full bath. The shed is wired for electric, just needs finished.

724.448.3988
MLS#1062604

Dan Thornton
\$220,000



Sun Mine Rd.

Located in South Butler School dist., this two story home sits on over an acre of property. Features a large eat in kitch, LR with French doors, HW flrs and new ceramic flooring. The Mstr BR has a vaulted ceiling, a private master bath and walk in closet. The add'l 3 bedrooms are nice sized and have a lot of natural light. Also included is a large rear deck. All freshly painted with fabulous floorplan! QM transfer with the property. Quiet, private setting!! Dr Rt 228 to L on Westminster Rd. Westminster becomes Sun Mine. Home on left.

Hutterer/Stahl
\$265,000

724.448.0525
MLS#1065463



Buffalo Township

Great home in South Butler neighborhood close to schools and parks! Nice level over-sized lot featuring a fireplace in the living room, eat in kitchen, formal dining room, 4 large bedrooms and master suite! Canvas awning covering the back porch and additional patio area for entertaining. Dir: Rt. 356 L Fisher R Janice House on left

724.996.2647
MLS#1054070

Hutterer/Stahl
\$279,900



Winfield Township

This home has so many possibilities. Move in condition and in South Butler School District. Zoned commercial. All of the work/permits have been already completed for you. Have your home and separate business in one location, or rent the office for additional income. Ample parking. House is adorable, great country location. 28x40 workshop.

724.816.3576
MLS#1062921

Linda Biernesser
\$174,000



Stephanie Oswald



Brenda Berger



Marilyn Stahl & Joyce Hutterer



Linda Biernesser



Dan Thornton