

What is mould?

Moulds are a type of fungi that grows best in damp and poorly ventilated areas. Mould can be found in all environments including outside. Mould may look like fuzz, or discoloration or a stain on material like wood.

Spores are the microscopic 'seeds' which fungi, including moulds release into the environment. They are sufficiently small that they can be suspended in air and be widely distributed. Spores are present in all environments, including outdoors.

How does mould affect people?

There are hundreds of thousands of species of mould and most are not hazardous to people.

Exposure to some moulds can trigger nasal congestion, sneezing, cough, wheeze, respiratory infections and worsen asthma and allergic conditions.

People with pre-existing medical conditions such as impaired immunity, allergies, severe asthma, emphysema or allergic lung diseases may be more susceptible to mould.

What should I do if I am unwell and have been exposed to mould?

If a person has ongoing medical complaints which might be due to mould then they should consult their doctor. It is important to ensure that treatment for potentially serious conditions like asthma is optimal and to make sure a person is not suffering from a medical condition which is not related to mould.

How is mould exposure in a building controlled?

Mould needs moisture to survive. Therefore mould in a building is controlled by reducing moisture and ensuring that there is adequate ventilation. This may require the fitting of ventilation fans and fixing leaking pipes or areas of condensation. Mould should be removed as soon as it appears.

Mould cannot be eliminated entirely from the indoor or outdoor environment. Controlling mould levels involves reducing the conditions which promote its growth and keeping indoor exposures similar to those encountered in the general environment.

Mould can be a problem in residential homes as well as commercial buildings where attention should be paid to areas such as bathrooms, cupboards and storage areas.