

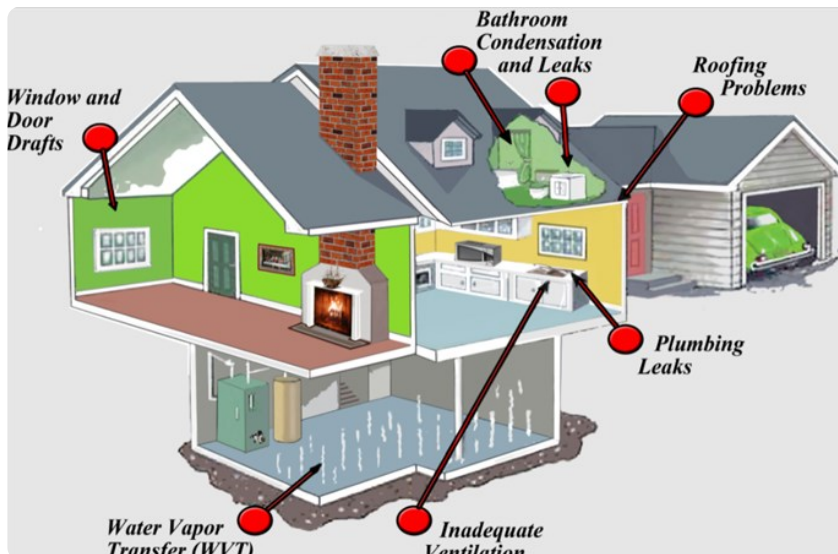
Keep it dry: How to stop mold growth by first controlling moisture in your home



Myth vs. fact:

- **MYTH:** Only harsh chemicals (like bleach) will clean up mold.
- **FACT:** Warm soapy water can remove mold spores.
- **MYTH:** I can't stop mold from growing in my home.
- **FACT:** Keeping humidity levels with thermostat between 30 and 50%, fixing and cleaning up any leaks right away, and improving air circulation and ventilation by using fans will help prevent mold growth.
- **MYTH:** Air purifiers are all safe to use and can help address mold concerns.
- **FACT:** Not all air purifiers are the same and some can produce ozone, which is a respiratory irritant to sensitive people. Use purifiers that have a HEPA filter to help filter molds.

Moisture can lead to mold growth from these areas:



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Steps to reduce humidity, moisture and mold issues:

- Use bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans for 20 minutes after using rooms.
- Dryers and other appliances should be vented to the outside of the home.
- Run dehumidifier to reduce humidity and keep setting between 30 and 50%.
- Fix leaks within 72 hours to prevent mold growth (like drippy faucets).
- Slope the ground (outside) away from foundation.
- Install gutter down spout extensions to move moisture away from the foundation.
- Use HEPA filtered air purifiers to help remove mold spores and fragments from the home.



Dos and don'ts for healthy and safe homes:

For hard surfaces like windowsills, door frames, floors, wood trim, toys, etc.

1. Use a vacuum on the surface, ideally with one that has a HEPA filter to remove any surface mold.
2. Wear gloves when cleaning.
3. If using rags, use at least 2 per room. Prepare spray bottle with soap & water OR fill bucket #1 with soap & water & #2 with clean water. You may use wet wipes instead of rags and buckets.
4. Wet the rag & wash surfaces well, dip 2nd rag in rinse water & wipe down washed surfaces. Empty water into toilet & refill buckets after each room. Repeat. If using wet wipes, dispose of them safely.

For carpeting and/or upholstered furniture

1. Steam cleaning surfaces to re-move settled dust and mold a few times each year or as needed.
2. Clean surfaces with a HEPA filtered vacuum on a daily and weekly basis.
3. Wash ANY removable covers on couches, chairs, or curtains in warm to hot soapy water once a month or as needed.

* Dispose of any items not easily cleanable or damaged.

* For areas you are not comfortable cleaning, refer to EPA or CDC guidance for mold cleanup.

If you have questions that are not answered here, please visit [Mid-America Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit \(MAPEHSU\) Children's Mercy Kansas City webpage](https://cmkc.link/MAPEHSU) at cmkc.link/MAPEHSU for further guidance. If you cannot find answers to your questions online, call our PEHSU hotline at (800) 421-9916 (March 2022).

This fact sheet was supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and funded (in part) by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ATSDR). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supports the PEHSUs by providing partial funding to CDC/ATSDR through an Inter-Agency Agreement. The findings and conclusions presented have not been formally disseminated by CDC/ATSDR or EPA and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy. Use of trade names that may be mentioned is for identification only and does not imply endorsement by the CDC/ATSDR or EPA.



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