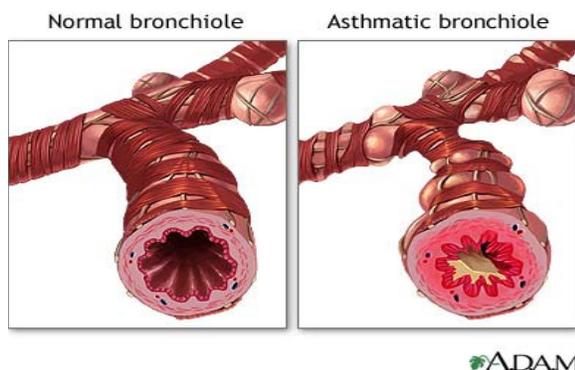


Asthma and Mold

What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that can make it hard to breathe. This is because of:

- Inflammation (swelling)
- Mucus in the airways
- Tightening of muscles around the airways



Common signs and symptoms of asthma include:

- wheezing
- coughing
- stuffy nose
- tight chest
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired

Asthma in Utah

- About 9% of Utahns currently have asthma¹
 - » Males - 6.5%
 - » Females - 11.5%

Asthma Triggers

An asthma trigger is something that can cause someone to have an asthma attack. Examples include²:

- Allergens - a substance that can cause an allergic reaction (pollen, animals, dust, mold)
- Irritants (cold air, chemicals and sprays, tobacco smoke)
- Upper respiratory infection (like a cold)

What is mold?

Molds are fungi. People are regularly exposed to 200 different fungi and there is no way to completely avoid exposure³.

- Mold spores are found both indoors and outdoors³.
- Mold spores are always in the air³.
- Mold needs moisture and food to grow³.
- Mold begins to grow when it lands on a damp surface and “eats” what it lands on³.

Mold spores are always in the air.

Outside molds digest dead leaves and other dead plant material. Inside molds are usually found in damp areas like bathrooms, basements, and around windows⁴.

The best way to reduce mold inside your home is by controlling moisture². Mold needs moisture to grow.

Mold can grow on^{2,3}

- leaves
- wood
- paper
- carpet

Mold and Asthma

Mold can be an asthma trigger³.

Molds produce irritants and allergens³. 6-10% of people are thought to be allergic to allergens from fungi².

Not enough research has been done to know if exposure to fungi causes asthma. In people with asthma who are allergic, exposure to fungi can cause an asthma attack².

Asthma and Mold

Mold and Respiratory Symptoms

In people who are allergic to mold, breathing or touching it can cause an allergic reaction. An allergic reaction to mold can happen right away or be delayed⁵ and can be caused by live or dead mold spores⁶.

Common allergic responses include³:

- sneezing
- runny nose
- red eyes

Even if you are not allergic to mold, mold can irritate your⁶:

- eyes
- skin
- nose
- throat
- lungs

Other symptoms from mold exposure in a damp indoor environment include upper respiratory tract symptoms (like sore throat, nasal congestion, and rhinitis), cough, and wheeze⁵.

Exposure to mold can make people who are not yet affected by it become sensitive to it and repeated exposure can make people more sensitive⁶.



What to do

If you have asthma, avoid contact with mold².

Mold can grow in areas that are hard to see. Common signs of mold growth include water stains and a musty or earthy smell⁷. Check your home often for signs of mold or moisture. Wipe up any excess water quickly to prevent mold

growth. If you know you have mold, use your resources to clean it instead of testing it⁷.

If the area of mold you need to clean is less than about 10 square feet, you can usually clean it yourself⁴. Refer to the following Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

resource for help with mold cleanup.

- **Mold, Moisture, and Your Home:**
www.epa.gov/mold/mold-and-your-home
- **Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings:**
www.epa.gov/mold/mold-remediation-schools-and-commercial-buildings-guide

More information about asthma is available at:
www.health.utah.gov/asthma/



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