

Health NEWS & NOTES

Proper Cleaning May Reduce Mold Allergies

(NAPSA)—For the more than 40 to 50 million Americans who suffer from the misery of allergies, protecting themselves, and their families, from exposure to the usual suspects—ragweed and pollen—can mean hiding indoors. Staying inside, however, could be causing more harm than good. Most people are unaware that common household mold may be triggering their allergy symptoms.

Dr. Jay Portnoy, “The Mold Doctor,” and chief of allergy, asthma and immunology of Children’s Mercy Hospital, Kansas City, Mo., says that exposure to allergens from molds and airborne mold spores may trigger common symptoms of a mold allergy. These symptoms include nasal congestion, coughing, upper respiratory distress, chronic headaches and flu-like symptoms.

Molds are ever-present in the environment, and the home environment is no exception. While most household molds have an outdoor source, they easily gain access to the home through open windows and doors, and can be brought inside on pets and clothing. Once inside, mold spores can colonize on exposed surfaces such as windowsills, refrigerator seals, and shower grout, thriving with only a source of food and moisture.

“Indoor mold management is a case where an ounce of prevention truly is better than a pound of cure. Regular inspection and proper cleaning can prevent many fungus-related problems,” says Portnoy.

Common household mold, visibly growing in the shower or invisible on the windowsill can be found in virtually all homes. According to *The Mold Doctor*, there are simple things that people can do to curb mold growth and clean the mold that does get through, limiting their exposure.

- Disinfect mold-prone hard surfaces regularly with a bleach-based product that has been proven



Common household mold can trigger allergies.

to kill 99.9 percent of common household mold, like Tilex Mold and Mildew Remover. *

- Reduce moisture in the home by:

- ✓ Maintaining indoor relative humidity between 35-50 percent;

- ✓ Fixing leaking pipes immediately and preventing water from intruding into the house;

- ✓ Using exhaust fans to increase bathroom and kitchen ventilation; and

- ✓ Using air conditioning during the summer months at times of high humidity.

Supplemental efforts to remove airborne spores may include using high efficiency air filters, though it is better to eliminate their sources. Those seeking more information about allergies and asthma can visit the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America’s (AAFA) Web site at www.AAFA.org.

* Because of the potential sensitivities of allergy and asthma sufferers to cleaning products, cleaning should be done by non-sensitive individuals and the area should be allowed to ventilate before re-entry. Always read and follow all precautions and usage directions before using cleaning products.