

# Removing mould at home

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## Mould commonly grows in moist, poorly ventilated environments.

While undisturbed mould is not a major health hazard for most people, there are some important safety steps to follow when trying to remove mould. There are also some easy steps to follow to reduce the chance of mould regrowth.

### Safety First

Are you the right person to remove mould in your home? Or should you use a professional cleaner? If you are allergic or sensitive to mould, you may develop a stuffy nose, irritated eyes, wheezing or difficulty with breathing or skin irritation. People with weakened immune systems and with chronic lung diseases might be susceptible to infections.

Some people should not remove or be present when mould is removed including pregnant women, children and people with weakened immune systems or chronic lung diseases, such as chronic obstructive lung disease.

If you've decided to remove mould, ensure good ventilation, wear protective clothing such as rubber gloves, eye protection, overalls, suitable foot wear and a P1 or P2 mask (available from your hardware store).

### Step 1 – remove the source of moisture

Mould will only grow in damp unventilated rooms. Check for sources of water from damaged pipes and drains and call a plumber if repairs are required.

### Step 2 – remove the mould

Wash clothing, bedding and other soft fabric articles such as soft toys on a hot cycle. Wash all clothes used for cleaning up separately to other clothes. Other contaminated soft furnishings that cannot be put in a washing machine will have to be cleaned professionally. If this is not possible they may need to be thrown out.

Thoroughly clean all affected hard surfaces. In many cases household detergent can do the job if used correctly. Check the product's label to see how much to use and on which surfaces they can be used. Vinegar solution (one part vinegar to three parts water) can also be used.

Apply cleaner and give it time to work before you mop or sponge it up. After cleaning a room or item, go over it again with a disinfectant to kill the germs and to remove any smells.

**Do not mix detergents with bleaches, together in the same bucket, as this may release hazardous fumes.**

### Step 3 – prevent mould regrowth

Mould sometimes grows back after cleaning. To minimise this, it is important to dry the area where the mould grew.

If the area has been subject to flooding it may be necessary to remove the wall lining (plaster) to allow for proper drying of the internal walls.

The simplest way to dry a room is to open doors and windows to thoroughly air the house.

Portable mechanical heaters (available from equipment hirers) can be used. However, if you dry out a flood affected area too quickly there is a risk of damage to the building, so seek professional advice from a building surveyor if you intend to use mechanical dryers.

**Remember that petrol or diesel generators or outdoor gas heaters should never be used indoors.**

For further advice and assistance contact the Environmental Health Officer at your local council.

For any health concerns, seek medical advice.

For additional information see

[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/downloads/mould\\_growth.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/downloads/mould_growth.pdf)