



MOLDS AND FUNGI

Everywhere you go, you are surrounded by fungi or molds. As you walk through the woods, you will see them on trees or decaying leaves. In your kitchen, you encounter them as the yeast in the slice of bread you will eat. When you are sick, the doctor may give you penicillin, which is also made from fungus. A handful of soil contains thousands of fungi. Some of these fungi make the soil fertile, while others kill plants. Some fungi can be eaten, while others are used to make vitamins and medications.

Fungus or mold reproduces by releasing millions of spores into the air. These spores, one released, can have a dramatic effect on the allergic individual. The symptoms of a mold allergy are usually nasal congestion, cloudy nasal drainage, headache, chronic sinusitis, chronic fatigue, wet cough, chronic otitis media, or dermatitis, although other symptoms may arise.

People who are mold allergic can have symptoms during any season of the year. Many of the allergenic molds are found inside of our homes, especially in the dampness of the basement, in barns, the attic, or anywhere boxes, books, old newspapers, and clothes are stored. Some molds are contained in the foods that are eaten such as cheese, meats, yeast products, alcohol, fruits and vegetables. Nature relies on molds to keep the soil fertile and feed the vegetation. During the fall months, wet leaves are a source of mold exposure. In heavily wooded areas there is a considerable amount of mold in dead vegetation and stagnant water.

The allergic patient must keep their environment as free from mold as possible. To control environmental mold/fungus:

1. discard old newspapers, magazines, books, furniture, leather and cloth
2. moisture-proof basement or crawl space and keep dry with dehumidifier
3. remove plants, dried flowers, aquariums, terrariums
4. vent clothes dryer to the outside
5. discard old pillows, especially feather pillows
6. cover pillows, mattress and box springs with a vinyl encasement
7. use air conditioning whenever possible
8. clean air vents and filters at least monthly
9. replace old furnace filters with a permanent allergen-removing filter



10. choose upper level bedrooms and apartments if possible
 11. wear an allergy mask when working in moldy or musty areas
 12. use a mold-removing product to clean areas of mold growth
 13. keep the diet free of mold/fungus containing foods
 14. discourage allergic children from playing in heavily wooded areas and in or near stagnant water
 15. relative humidity of no more than 65% will limit mold growth
 16. refrigerate to prevent food spoilage and retard mold growth
- The allergic individual should also avoid a diet that consists of mold-containing foods. The following foods should be avoided:

1. cheeses of all kinds
2. all alcoholic beverages
3. mushrooms
4. vinegar or vinegar-containing foods
5. breads, pastries or any products containing yeast
6. pickled or smoked meats, fish or other products
7. sour cream, buttermilk or yogurt
8. dried fruits and vegetables
9. unwashed fruits and vegetables
10. fish that is more than 24 hours old or leftover meat
11. products containing citric acid (citric acid is usually made from aspergillus mold)

MOLDS

Alternaria airborne.	Parasite on plants and plant materials. The spores are easily
Aspergillus fruits	Common soil fungus, also found in damp hay, grain, sausage and



Cephalosporium plants	Common soil inhabitant and has been isolated from dust in textile plants
Helminthosporium	Found in cereal grain plants such as corn wheat, oats and rye
Hormodendrum and	Found in decomposed plants, leather rubber, cloth, paper and wood products, released into the atmosphere in great numbers after rain damp weather
Penicillium cheese and penicillin	Normally inhabits the soil but grows readily on fruits, bread, other foods. Mutant strains are used to produce the antibiotic penicillin
Fusarium tomatoes and	Parasite found on green plants such as peas, beans, cotton, rice; also found on decaying plants
Stemphyllium decaying	Grows readily on damp paper, canvas, cotton fabric as well as plant material
Mucor barnyards	Normally inhabits soil; frequently found around barns and where it grows on animal waste
Epicoccum	Normally a soil organism which can often be found on decaying vegetative material, plant leaves and uncooked fruit