Is there a **Fungus** among us?

Molds can be found almost anywhere; they can grow on all kinds of things, as long as moisture and oxygen are present. There are molds that can grow on wood, paper, carpet, food, and insulation. When excessive moisture accumulates in buildings or on building materials, you may find mold there too, particularly if the moisture problem remains undiscovered or unaddressed. It is impossible to eliminate all mold and mold spores in the indoor environment. However, mold growth can be controlled indoors by controlling moisture indoors.

Concern about indoor exposure to mold has been increasing as more people have become aware that a variety of health effects and symptoms may develop after exposure to certain molds. The EPA has responded by issuing several reference documents to aid homeowners, schools and commercial building managers address these concerns*.

The key to mold control is moisture control. A few simple common sense measures can help solve moisture problems before they become mold problems.

- Fix leaky plumbing and leaks in the building as soon as possible.
- Watch for condensation and wet spots. Fix sources of moisture problems.
- Clean and dry wet or damp spots within 48 hours.
- Adjust humidity to prevent condensation.
- Keep heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) drip pans clean, flowing properly, and unobstructed.
- Vent moisture-generating appliances, such as dryers, to the outside.
- Maintain low indoor humidity, below 60% relative humidity (RH), ideally 30-50%.
- Perform regular building/HVAC inspections and maintenance as scheduled.
- Don’t let foundations stay wet. Provide drainage and slope the ground away from the foundation.
- Bathrooms are often damp and can be hard to maintain completely free of mold. If there’s some mold in the shower or elsewhere in the bathroom, run a fan or open the window to increase the air movement. Clean more often too, to prevent mold from recurring, or at least keep it to a minimum.
- Don’t provide mold a place to grow. Keep your areas clean, uncluttered, and well ventilated. At UAB, report leaks or malfunctioning HVAC to maintenance immediately.
