The Asthma & Allergy Center

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Mold Facts

Mold levels tend to be lowest when there is deep snow on the ground. Levels rise substantially when vegetation is disturbed, either by air currents or agricultural practices. Mold prevalence in the Midwest is closely tied to agricultural seasons where mold allergies are the highest. The Southeast and East coast have major potential, but these areas are less disturbed from agriculture. Concentrations of certain mold allergens and smuts in old fields are 10-20 times higher than in the surrounding air. More vigorous disruption of natural materials such as field cutting or threshing can create spore clouds that can produce intense discomfort. Work done on silage and compost heaps also produces high exposures.

Humidity is another factor promoting mold growth. The most useful preventative measure that patients can take to reduce the allergen is dehumidification. Do not let your dehumidifier become contaminated with mold growth. Air conditioning in home, car, office may also reduce exposure to the molds. A simple filter face mask seems to be effective when worn while performing mold contact tasks.

Cleaning mold containing films from household surfaces is essential. Scouring is the principal means of removing these films. A 5% solution of water and household bleach (1 part bleach to 20 parts water) is the best cleaning solution. If water seepage or high humidity is present, that source must be corrected to prevent further mold growth.

The most readily contaminated article found in a growing number of homes is carpeting in the bathroom and kitchen.