

MOLD IN THE HOME

Trap

Randi called her landlord again. There was a musty odor that cleaning and air fresheners just didn't eliminate, and her air conditioner wasn't cooling properly. She spoke with her landlord and had a technician check out the system. She found a leak near the air handler, and mold was starting to grow on a nearby wall. The air conditioner could be repaired, but the mold problem was not resolved. Randi gave the report to the landlord who told her he would get to it soon, but Randi was now worried about the health of her toddlers. A bad situation just got worse!

Tips

Molds occur naturally almost everywhere in our tropical environment.

Indoors, mold can be found where humidity levels are high, such as showers or areas where water damage has occurred. Some key points to keep in mind are:

- It's impossible to eliminate all mold indoors. Mold growth can be controlled indoors by controlling moisture. Work to keep the humidity level between 40 percent and 60 percent, and adjust the air conditioner to the setting recommended by the manufacturer to help keep mold under control. Be sure there is adequate ventilation, such as exhaust fans, in bathrooms, kitchens, as well as in homes without air conditioning.
- If you believe your family is ill because of exposure to mold, consult your health care provider for the appropriate medical action.
- If you feel your property owner or landlord has been unresponsive to your concerns regarding mold exposure, you may need to have the air quality tested by a private firm as the County Health Department no longer performs Indoor Air Quality Onsite visits. The local housing authority or code enforcement office may also help by providing the documentation needed to make your case and recommendations for correcting the problems.
- The Department of Business and Professional Regulation is responsible for licensing and regulating mold assessors and mold remediators and may be reached at 850-487-1395. Both the EPA (<http://www.epa.gov/mold>) and the CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/mold>) provide recommendations for mold problems.

Consumer Affairs mediates landlord-tenant disputes.

For more information call Palm Beach County Consumer Affairs at 561-712-6600 (Boca/ Delray 888-852-7362 - toll free).