



Reduction Of Mold Exposure

To effectively manage an allergy to molds (also called yeasts), it is critical to reduce your exposure to them. Unlike pollens which are in the air for limited periods of time, mold spores are generally in the air throughout the year. Also, molds and toxins from them are found in common foods. Though it is not possible to eliminate the presence of mold altogether, the following recommendations may reduce your exposure:

Keep the level of humidity low at home. In summer, keep it below 35% if possible with an air conditioner or dehumidifier. Minimize use of humidifiers in winter.

Use an exhaust fan in the bathroom after use and above the stove when cooking.

Remove mildew and other molds in the home when you detect them. (Equal parts of household bleach and water may be used for this purpose.)

Avoid keeping heavy leather items in the bedroom.

Reduce the number of indoor plants. Molds grow well in planters.

Some long-term measures: Substitute paints for wallpaper. Avoid heavy drapes. Don't pile up heavy garments and sleeping bags on the floor of closets.

Molds grow well in dark, humid areas. so avoid or minimize exposure to areas of high mold growth, e.g., basements, attics, barns, and areas with decomposing grass and compost.

If you also suffer from pollen allergy, avoid hiking in the woods or working in lawns during the height of pollen season. (Pollen exposure will increase mold sensitivity in these settings.)

Be discreet in visiting antique shops, old-books shops and other such areas where molds flourish.

Foods that may trigger allergic reactions in mold-sensitive persons: fermented foods (especially beer and wine), vinegar and salad dressings, aged and hard cheeses, malt and foods containing malt, dried fruits, mushrooms, peanuts and peanut butter, and pickles and pickled foods.

Another problem area is mycotoxins - toxins produced by molds. In general, the longer the time yeasts have had to grow in foods, the greater the risk of toxicity from mold toxins. Thus, yeast in baked bread does not have the same risk as yeast in fermented foods.