

MOLD AWARENESS:

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN BUYING OR RENTING A HOME



Dr. Diana Stafford

When searching for your new home, whether buying or renting, mold should be a top concern. Mold exposure can lead to various health issues, including dizziness, headaches, fatigue, sinus issues, and even more serious chronic conditions with symptoms in every body system.

To protect yourself and your family, here are key things to look for and steps to take to avoid mold problems:

1. Visible Signs of Mold

Before committing to a property, do a thorough visual inspection of the entire space, including basements, attics, closets, and behind appliances. Look for discoloration or dark spots on walls, ceilings, floors, and around windows. Mold can be any color, not just black. Don't overlook areas like bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry rooms, which are prone to moisture and mold growth.

2. Musty Odors

There is not always an odor present with mold, but if it is present, then mold is definitely an issue. Be sure to investigate any unusual odors before considering a property.

3. Water Damage or Moisture Issues

Check for signs of water damage, such as water stains on walls and ceilings, peeling paint, bubbling wallpaper, or warped floors. Also, inspect areas under sinks, around bathtubs, near windows, and in basements for signs of leaks, past flooding, or standing water. Excess moisture and water damage are prime environments for mold growth. Ask the current owner or landlord about any previous water damage and how it was addressed.



4. Ventilation and Humidity Control

Proper ventilation is essential in preventing mold growth. Check that the property has adequate ventilation in high-moisture areas like bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry rooms. Ensure there are working exhaust fans in bathrooms and that the HVAC system is functioning correctly. You may also want to bring a humidity meter when viewing the property; indoor humidity levels above 50% can promote mold growth. Aim for a home where humidity levels have been maintained below 50%.



5. Professional Mold Assessment

It is important to get a professional mold assessment before finalizing a purchase or lease, especially if the property shows any signs of past water damage or if you have sensitivities to mold. A mold assessor will use specialized tools, such as moisture meters and infrared cameras, to detect hidden mold in walls, ceilings, and other hard-to-see places. They can also take air samples to identify the presence of airborne mold spores, which can help you assess the overall air quality of the home.

6. Ask for Mold History

When dealing with the current homeowner or landlord, ask about the property's mold history. Inquire if there have been past mold issues, how they were remediated, and whether there are any ongoing moisture problems. This transparency is crucial for understanding potential future risks and the property's current condition.

7. Look for Mold-Resistant Features

Modern homes may include mold-resistant features, such as mold-resistant drywall, waterproof membranes, and treated wood. If the property has been recently remodeled or built, ask if any of these materials have been used, as they can help reduce the risk of mold growth.



Mold can be a hidden problem that leads to serious health concerns, so it's vital to thoroughly inspect any potential new home for signs of mold, water damage, and moisture issues. A professional mold assessment before buying or renting, as it can save you from future health problems and costly remediation efforts. A little due diligence now can help you find a safe, low-mold environment for you and your family.



For questions on mold, mycotoxins and bacteria in the home or to schedule a virtual or in-person environmental assessment, check the [ISEAI.org](https://www.iseai.org) IEP list for a professional near you.

For questions on mold, mycotoxins and bacteria in the body or to get started with healing your body, contact Diana Stafford, MD at 757-799-2032, [doctorstafford.com](https://www.doctorstafford.com) and on social media linked below:

