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Home Remedies: Removing Mold



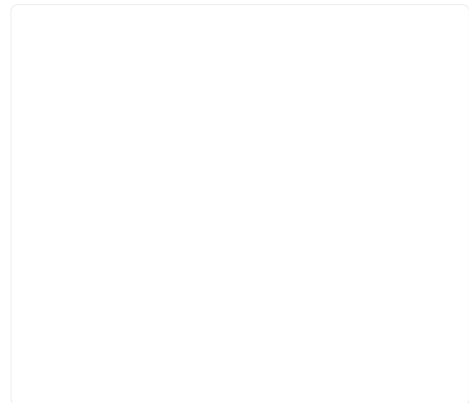
By [Gemma Alexander](#)

© OCT 7, 2021 [home remedies, mold](#)



Mold is responsible for some of the best cheese. But when you find mold growing in your house it is gross and not a little embarrassing. But it's also almost inevitable. Mold is a type of fungus; it grows from spores that are nearly ubiquitous and can sprout in any moist environment. Left alone, mold can damage the surface it grows on, trigger allergies, and [even make you sick](#). But that's also true of many of the commercial fungicides available for removing mold. How can you keep your home free of both mold and chemical toxins?

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Household Mold

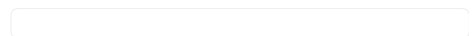
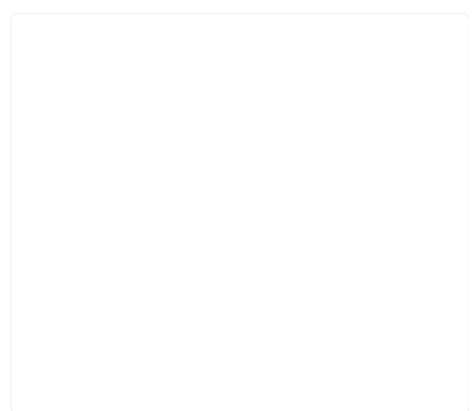
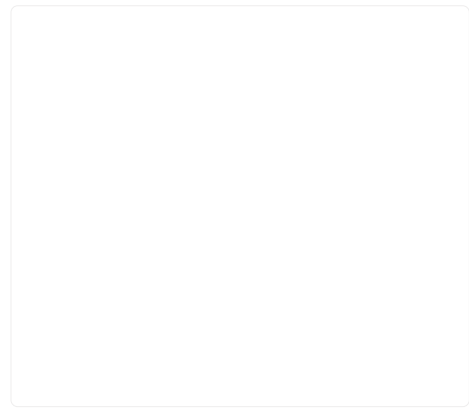
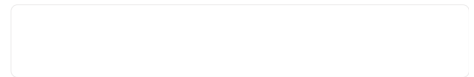
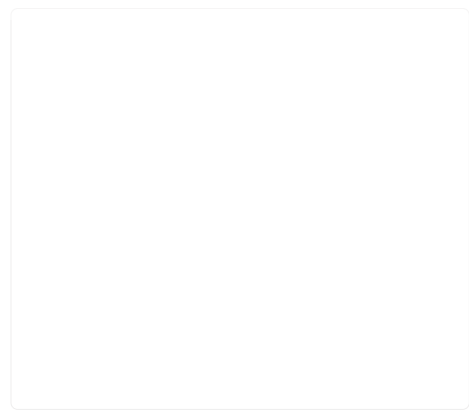
Household mold is mentally associated with filthy, neglected homes. But spores are literally everywhere, and mold can begin to grow in even the cleanest homes. There's no need to be ashamed if you find mold growing in your bathroom or behind a houseplant, but you can't afford to be complacent, either. Mold spores are common allergens and can trigger asthma. Some types of mold release toxins that can cause [serious illness](#). If left to grow on walls, mold can cause structural damage. Once it gets established, mold can be [nearly impossible](#) to eliminate. Many people are forced to resort to professional cleaners, and even to replace carpets and drywall.

Prevention

It may be impossible to prevent all mold growth in your home, especially if you live in a damp climate or an older house. But you can do a lot to discourage it. The key to mold control is moisture control. Fix any and all leaks (roof, pipes, and windows are common culprits) as soon as they are discovered. Remove carpeting and other absorbent materials and thoroughly dry any areas that have been affected by leaks. Use exhaust fans or at least open a window in the bathroom and kitchen. If your house is generally damp (humidity levels above 50% throughout the day), use an air conditioner or dehumidifier.

Finding Mold

The CDC does not recommend [mold testing](#). If you find mold, it needs to be removed regardless of any information a test may provide. People talk about "[black mold](#)" because it is the most common appearance of household mold. But mold can be any color and color is no indication of its potential danger. If you need to clean more than 10 square feet, check the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guide titled [Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings](#); you may need professional help. Once mold starts to grow in carpet,



insulation, ceiling tiles, drywall, or wallboard, the only way to deal with it is by [removal and replacement](#).

Removing Mold

Whatever cleaner you use to remove mold, be sure to work with good ventilation and all necessary protective equipment – masks, gloves, and goggles will protect you from both the cleaner and the spores that you will stir up. Do not mix products to avoid the risk of generating toxic gasses. Always use commercial products according to the instructions on the package. For all homemade solutions, the recommendation is to saturate the moldy area using a spray bottle, wait between a few minutes to an hour, and scrub the mold off with a brush.

According to the CDC, mold [can be removed](#) from hard surfaces with household products. Let's look at those household products more closely.

Fungicidal Cleaners

Commercial [mold removers](#) all contain some sort of biocide. Some, like the popular [RMR-141 RTU](#) or the concentrated [Wet & Forget](#) contain a proprietary broad-spectrum biocide formula. The most common biocide in commercial products is [sodium hypochlorite](#), also known as bleach. You can make your own bleach solution of no more than a cup of household laundry bleach in a gallon of water. However, the EPA [does not recommend](#) biocides (chemicals such as chlorine bleach) for routine mold control. This is partly due to the products' toxicity. It is also related to the fact that people who believe they have killed mold are less likely to eliminate the conditions that allow it to thrive.

Tea Tree Oil

Tea tree oil extracted from the species *Melaleuca alternifolia* is widely touted as a [natural fungicide](#) for use in a solution of 1 teaspoon per cup of water. Although tea tree oil is generally considered much more pleasant smelling than most commercial cleaners, the odor of this solution is very strong, requiring good ventilation. Although some people must have found success with this method, when we tried it at Earth911, [tea tree oil](#) had no visible effect on the presence of mold.

Grapefruit Seed Extract

Thanks to its high concentration of citric acid, grapefruit seed extract is considered a powerful disinfectant that is nevertheless safe for human consumption. As such, it is recommended across the internet for everything from [water purification](#) to [mold cleanup](#). In a solution of 10 drops per cup of water, the extract is odorless. When we tried it, [grapefruit seed extract](#) was somewhat more effective than tea tree oil, visibly removing some of the mold, but leaving most of it untouched.

Vinegar

Vinegar, a mild acid that is both safe for consumption and popular as a [nontoxic household cleaner](#) is another popular DIY mold solution. Undiluted white vinegar is the most popular vinegar for cleaning, and the one recommended for treating mold. Vinegar was the most effective natural mold cleaner we tried, surprisingly removing mold slightly better than a bleach-based commercial fungicide.

Other Natural Cleaners

Lemon juice, baking soda, and hydrogen peroxide are a few more natural solutions that we've seen recommended for treating mold. But we haven't tried these ourselves. Once we tried vinegar, there didn't seem to be a need. What natural mold cleaners have you tried? How well did they work?

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