



The Wellness Chronicle

May 2014

Volume 2, Issue 5

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Nasal Allergies and Household Mold

WebMD Feature By Ellen Greenlaw

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"Spring is sooner recognized by plants than by men."

- Chinese Proverb

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and Freezer

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Do your nasal allergies linger well after the first frost? If so, you may have a mold allergy. Mold is found everywhere -- outdoors on leaves and rotting wood and indoors in damp basements and bathrooms. So mold allergies and allergy symptoms can happen year round.

The symptoms of a mold allergy are similar to those of other nasal allergies -- sneezing, a runny or stuffy nose, and itchy, watery eyes. Untreated mold allergy can also lead to more significant health problems.

Controlling a mold allergy means controlling your exposure to mold. That isn't always easy outdoors. But you can limit exposure inside your home by preventing household mold from forming, cleaning up existing household mold, and preventing outdoor mold from getting tracked inside.



How Mold Causes Allergies

Mold is a type of fungus that serves an important function in the natural world: It breaks down dead plant matter. Unlike plants, molds don't have seeds.

Instead, they grow and spread through spores.

The tiny mold spores are what cause an allergic reaction in some people. But only a few types of mold actually cause allergies.



Household Mold: Control Moisture to Control Allergies

"The key to preventing mold in your home is controlling moisture levels," Päivi Salo, PhD, an epidemiologist with the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, says. "Molds need water to live. Indoor mold tends to grow in places that are moist or damp, such as on bathroom tiles, near sinks, in damp basements or crawl spaces, and areas around windows."

Try these strategies to prevent molds from growing in your home:

- Open the window or use an exhaust fan in the bathroom when showering.
- Make sure clothes dryers and stoves are properly vented to the outside. This will help reduce

moisture and humidity levels in your home.

- Clean your bathroom frequently. Pay special attention to tiles and shower curtains, where soap scum can harbor mold.
- Fix all plumbing problems and leaks right away and wipe up any excess moisture. In most cases, drying wet or damp areas within 48 hours can prevent mold from growing.
- Open a window or use exhaust fans when cooking or running the dishwasher to reduce humidity.
- Clean sinks and tubs often -- at least once a month.



- Clean up condensation on windows, walls, or pipes immediately.
- If necessary, use a dehumidifier to reduce humidity in your home. Aim for an indoor humidity level between 30% to 60%. Be sure to empty and clean the dehumidifier's drain pan regularly.

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Volunteers needed and always welcome. Contact any of the program managers listed above!

Upcoming 2014 Wellness Events!!!

May
Lunch-n-Learn
Vanpool Information
Date: 1 May
Time: 1200-1230 hrs
Location: Bldg 350, Conf. Room

May
Lunch-n-Learn
Your Finances
Date: TBD
Time: 1200—1230 hrs
Location: TBD

June
Lunch-n-Learn: Lyme Disease,
Date: TBD
Time: 1200– 1230 hrs
Locations: Bldgs 350 and 370

Smoking Cessation Workshop
Date: 12 June
Time: 1600-1700 hrs
Location: Bldg 102 (Senator Terry Punt Building)



FOCUS ON HEALTHY EATING: CHOPPED SALAD



- Ingredients:**
- 1 romaine lettuce heart
 - 4 to 6 slices thick-cut bacon, cooked until crisp, cooled, and chopped
 - 1/2 pint grape tomatoes, halved
 - 2 carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
 - 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
 - 1 English cucumber, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
 - 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 - Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

LEAD Got Steps Pedometer Challenge POCs

Wellness Pedometer Challenge Program Manager:
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37	Irene Myers irene.t.myers2.civ@mail.mil	5716
LEMC	Tammy Piper tammy.l.piper2.civ@mail.mil	8481

- How to make it:**
1. Chop the lettuce heart into 1- to 2-inch pieces. Combine it with the bacon, other vegetables, and nuts in a large bowl and toss the mixture well.
 2. Keep the salad chilled until serving time. Then toss it again with enough dressing to lightly coat the vegetables, and season it with salt and pepper. Serves 6.
- Source: <http://spoonful.com/recipes/chop-chop-salad>



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Nasal Allergies and Household Mold

- Consider removing carpeting if humidity is a problem in your home. Mold can easily grow on carpeting and it's difficult to remove.
- If your basement is damp, try increasing the temperature to reduce humidity. Be sure that ground water drainage is going away from your home to prevent a leaky basement.

Keep your rain gutters clean so they don't get clogged.

How to Clean Indoor Mold

If mold is growing in your home, cleaning it up quickly is important. Not only can the mold irritate your allergies, but it can also damage whatever surface it is growing on.

These guidelines will help you remove mold:

- If the moldy surface is larger than 10 square feet, consider hiring a contractor to do the job. Be sure the person has experience removing mold.
- If your allergies are severe, ask someone else to clean the mold. If this isn't possible, wear a facemask while you are cleaning.
- Wear gloves and goggles while cleaning. These items will protect your skin and eyes from the mold. Don't touch mold with your bare skin.



- Use soap and warm water to scrub mold from hard surfaces, and then make sure the area is completely dry. The American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology also recommends using a bleach solution to clean washable surfaces.

- Once the area is dry, check to make sure that all of the mold has been removed and is no longer growing.
- Never paint or caulk over an area with mold. Remove the mold first.

It may be impossible to remove mold from porous objects, such as ceiling tiles or carpeting. If these items are moldy, they may need to be replaced.



Preventing Allergies: Keep Outdoor Molds Outdoors

Most exposure to molds happens outside. But mold spores from the outdoors can get into your home through windows and doors and on your shoes and clothing. "A lot of the molds inside your home are brought in from the outside," Salo tells WebMD.

Use these tips to help limit the molds that enter your home:

- Keep your doors and windows closed when outdoor mold spore counts are high. Use an air conditioner with a HEPA filter instead.
- Leave your shoes at the door so you don't track mold through your home.
- Take a shower and change your clothes after spending time outside.
- Clean and vacuum regularly. Use a vacuum that has a HEPA filter to catch small particles and dust.

Source: WebMD Feature
<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/living-with-allergies-11/household-mold?page=2>

Spring-Clean Your Refrigerator and Freezer

By [Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD](#)
 WebMD Weight Loss Clinic - Expert Column

Hopeful signs of spring are everywhere, with birds chirping, tulips and daffodils showing off their colors, and plenty of activity on the tennis courts and baseball fields. For many of us, all these things are also a sign that it's time to get started on the annual spring cleaning.

This year, along with the yard work and baseboards, resolve to add the refrigerator and freezer to your spring-cleaning list. Lurking deep inside them could be a scary "science experiment" or an ice-encrusted mess begging to be thrown away. And cleaning out your freezer and fridge means more than just a tidier-looking kitchen. Food kept too long or at improper temperatures can become contaminated with bacteria, which can cause illness.

Most people, it turns out, don't understand the dangers of improper food storage. The American Dietetic Association found that only 40% of consumers knew that eating food that has been stored in refrigerators warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit can increase the risk of food-borne illness.

Indeed, food poisoning and other food-borne illnesses are very common. Last year, there were an estimated 76 million cases of food-borne illness in the United States, according to the CDC.

When in Doubt, Throw It Out

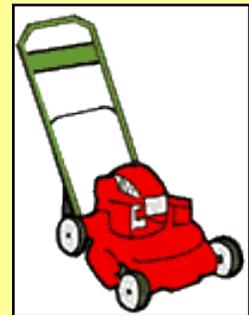
You can't always tell if a food has spoiled by its smell or appearance. Don't take chances with your health. The advice from the FDA: When it doubt, throw it out.

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FOCUS ON SAFETY: Spring Yard Work Safety

Itching to get the yard into shape for the summer? Here are ways to help ensure your spring spruce-up is disaster-free.

- Always wear protective clothing when you handle pesticides and fertilizers.
- More than 60,000 people are treated in emergency rooms each year for lawn-mower injuries:
- Rake before you mow to prevent any stones and loose debris from launching into the air
- Never operate a mower in your bare feet and avoid wearing loose clothing.
- Never start a mower indoors.
- Refueling your mower, make sure the engine is off and cool. Don't spill gasoline on a hot engine - and DON'T SMOKE while pouring gasoline.
- Never leave your mower unattended.
- Don't use electrical mowers on wet grass.
- At least 55,000 people each year sustain injuries from trimmers, lawn edgers, pruners and power saws:
- Read the manufacturer's instructions carefully before using the tools.
- Inspect the product for damage and don't use it if there are problems.
- Use proper eye protection.
- Make sure blade guards are in place on all cutting equipment.
- Don't let tools get wet unless they are labeled "immersible."
- Unplug all tools when not in use.
- Make sure the tool is in the "off" position before you plug it in.
- Store gasoline-powered equipment away from anything that uses a pilot light.
- Make sure you use the right saw for the task, and always wait for the saw blade to stop before pulling away from a cut to avoid kickback.
- When pruning trees, be careful not to let metal ladders or trimmers contact overhead wires.
- Before you do any "hands on" weed removal, be sure you know how to identify poison ivy, sumac, oak and similar toxic plants. Find out ahead of time how to treat the rashes they cause to reduce the irritation.



Continued from page 3...Spring Clean Your Refrigerator and Freezer

If food looks or smells strange, don't even risk tasting it -- just toss it. Mold you can see on the surface is just the tip of the iceberg; there could be poisons under the surface of the food that aren't detectable by the naked eye.

With a few foods -- such as hard cheeses, salami, and firm fruits -- you can cut the mold away, but be sure to remove a large section around any mold you can see. In general, food with mold should be tossed.

You already know that you need to throw out those containers of "mystery food" found in the bowels of your fridge. But what about those jars of condiments that have been open and around for years? Most will stay fresh for two months on the door of the refrigerator. That part of the fridge is designed for storing condiments, because their acidic content tends to make them more resistant to

bacterial contamination than other foods. Still, their quality is likely to decrease with time.

Prevent Food-Borne Illness

Your role in food safety starts as soon as you leave the grocery store. Go straight home and immediately stow your groceries. Check the labels of foods to determine the best way to store them.

Make sure your refrigerator is at 40 degrees or less and your freezer 0 degrees or less. The only sure way to check the temperature is by putting a clearly visible thermometer inside each compartment (but not on the door). Check it often as temperatures can fluctuate, especially in warm weather. If temperatures get too high, adjust the controls.

It's also important to keep your refrigerator and freezer clean. Wipe up any spills immediately. And once a week, wipe down the interior walls, shelves, and rubber gaskets with a weak cleaning solution to sanitize.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/food-poisoning/features/spring-clean-your-fridge-and-freezer>