

What Is *Cladosporium* and Is It Dangerous to Your Health?

Medically reviewed by [Judith Marcin, MD](#) on June 5, 2017 — Written by Lana Bandoim

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V **What is Cladosporium?**

W *Cladosporium* is a common mold that may affect your health. It can cause allergies and asthma in some people. In very rare cases, it can cause infections. Most species of *Cladosporium* aren't dangerous to humans.

Z *Cladosporium* can grow both indoors and outdoors. Spores from the mold can be airborne, which is also how the mold spreads.

This type of mold is more common in areas with humidity, moisture, and water damage.

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Identification

It can be difficult to identify *Cladosporium* in your home without professional help. There are [over 500 species](#) of *Cladosporium*. Many other types of mold can also grow in your home. *Cladosporium* may appear as brown, green, or black spots.

Cladosporium is commonly found in the home on:

- carpets
- wallpaper
- window sills
- V • fabrics
- walls
- W • wood surfaces
- Z • painted surfaces
- cabinets
- floors
- HVAC vent covers and grills
- paper

Cladosporium is more likely to grow in:

- wet or damp areas
- bathrooms
- basements
- areas near heating and cooling appliances
- attics

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You may not be able to identify the mold on your own. Consider hiring a professional mold tester or company to inspect your home. They can identify the type of mold in your home and help you remove it. Another option is to send mold samples to a professional laboratory for testing.

A professional mold tester can find mold you may not have seen.

Photo of *Cladosporium*



Allergies to *Cladosporium*

Exposure to *Cladosporium* affects people in different ways. Some people may develop an allergic reaction, while others may not.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction vary. It's possible to have symptoms year-round, or only during specific months. Your symptoms may be worse in damp areas or in areas with a higher concentration of mold.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction may include:

- dry skin ADVERTISEMENT
- sneezing

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- stuffy nose or runny nose
 - coughing

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- postnasal drip
- itchy throat, eyes, and nose
- watery eyes

An allergic reaction to mold may become serious in some cases. Severe reactions include:

- serious asthma attacks
- allergic fungal sinusitis

You may have an [allergic reaction and asthma](#) at the same time.

V Symptoms of an allergic reaction and asthma include:

- coughing
- tightness in your chest
- wheezing
- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

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[Learn more: Is there a connection between allergies and asthma? »](#)

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Risk factors for an allergic reaction

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Some people are more likely to have an allergic reaction to mold. Risk factors for an allergic reaction include:

- [family history](#) of allergies
- working or living in a place with a lot of mold
- working or living in a place with a lot of moisture in the air or high humidity
- working or living in a place with poor ventilation
- chronic respiratory problems such as asthma
- chronic skin problems such as [eczema](#)

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Treating allergic reactions to Cladosporium

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Talk to your doctor about treatment options for allergic reactions and asthma to mold. Limit your exposure to mold and seek help if symptoms continue to get worse. It's important to fix any leaks to prevent pooling of water and have proper ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens. Use a dehumidifier in areas prone to moisture, such as basements.

Your doctor may recommend over-the-counter (OTC) allergy medications first and suggest prescriptions if the OTC drugs don't work.

[Learn more: Decongestants to treat allergy symptoms »](#)

Medications your doctor may prescribe or recommend include:

- nasal corticosteroids
- antihistamines
- oral decongestants
- decongestant nasal sprays
- other anti-allergy drugs, such as montelukast ([Singulair](#))

Other treatment options include:



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- immunotherapy
- [nasal rinses](#)

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Is Cladosporium dangerous for pregnant women?

There is no current research to suggest that *Cladosporium* is dangerous to a fetus during pregnancy. It's possible that exposure to *Cladosporium* in pregnancy may trigger allergic symptoms or asthma within the mother.

Talk to your doctor about medications that are safe to take during pregnancy.

If possible, you should also identify and remove the mold from your home. Some products used to remove mold may be dangerous to use in pregnancy, and removing the mold may spread it to other areas. Consider hiring a professional mold removal service or have someone else treat the mold.

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Cladosporium can be removed from your home, but it's best to hire professional mold removers for this type of job.

The first step is to identify the type of mold growing in your home. It's also important to find out how much mold is in your house and how far it has spread. Next, you can work on removing it.

Here are the general steps for mold removal:

1. Inspect the home and identify the mold.
2. Find all areas that are affected by the mold.
3. Identify the source or cause of the mold.
- V 4. Remove the cause of the mold, such as fixing leaks or sealing areas.
- W 5. Remove moldy materials that can't be saved.
- Z 6. Clean up the areas that can be saved.
7. Finish repairs.

It's recommended that you get professional help to deal with mold. If you decide to do it alone, you may spread the mold to other areas of your house during the removal process. Mold removal requires special clothing and equipment.

Here are steps you can follow if you decide to try to remove mold on your own:

1. Gather the necessary supplies, including protective clothing and equipment.
2. Prepare the area by removing items not affected by the mold.
3. Seal off the affected area with heavy plastic sheets.
4. Set up a negative air machine to prevent the spread of the mold.

5. Wear protective clothing including a mask, gloves, shoe covers, and special suit.

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6. Remove or cut out moldy pieces in the area.
7. Use bleach or a fungicide to treat moldy areas.
8. Allow the area to dry completely before painting or caulking.

If antiques or family heirlooms have mold, consider talking them to a specialist who can clean them. You may not want to throw them away, but cleaning them yourself may be risky.

Your insurance company may cover the removal. Talk to your insurance agent to find out the details for mold coverage.

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Prevention

It may be possible to decrease the likelihood of mold growing in your home by following these tips:

- Clean your entire home frequently.
- Fix any leaks immediately after finding them.
- Improve ventilation by opening windows and using fans in steam-prone areas.

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- Close windows at night to keep mold spores out that require moisture to spread.

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- Use dehumidifiers in damp parts of the home.
- Use high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to capture mold in the air, and change filters frequently.
- Make sure water drains away from your house.
- Clean rain gutters frequently.
- Clean up any large spills of water in your home immediately after they occur.
- Watch for signs of mold, and replace moldy materials.
- Don't put carpets in bathrooms, kitchens, or unfinished basements. If these areas are carpeted, consider replacing the carpeting with a different flooring.
- Use mold-resistant paint and drywall.
- Allow surfaces to dry before painting or putting up drywall.

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The takeaway

Cladosporium is a common mold that may affect your health. The most common problems are allergic reactions and asthma. You can identify and remove the mold from your home. You can also take steps to prevent mold from growing in your home.

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