

### Health Effects and Symptoms Associated with Mold Exposure

There are four kinds of health problems that come from exposure to mold:

1. Allergic reactions
2. Irritation of tissues
3. Infections
4. Toxic effects due to mycotoxins

Mold can trigger an allergic reaction and asthma in sensitized individuals (repeated exposure to mold or mold spores sometimes causes previously non-sensitive individuals to become sensitized). About 15 million Americans are allergic to mold. The most common reactions are flu-like symptoms and asthma. Those with chronic lung or immune problems, are at risk for more serious reactions like fever, lung infections and a pneumonia-like illness.

Some toxic molds such as *Aspergillus*, *Cladosporium*, *Penicillium*, *Stachybotrys*, and *Trichoderma* produce mycotoxins capable of causing severe health problems.

When mold grows indoors in moist organic materials, building occupants may begin to notice odors and suffer a variety of health problems associated with mold exposure.

## Allergies

Inhaling or touching mold or mold spores can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Allergic reactions to mold are common

these reactions can be immediate or delayed up to six hours. Allergic reactions include:

- Respiratory problems, such as cough, sneezing, wheezing, infection, and/or difficulty in breathing
- Hay fever-type symptoms
- Nose and throat irritation
- Nasal or sinus congestion
- Watery, reddened, or burning eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Red eyes
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Dermatitis ( skin rash or irritation)
- Headache
- Fatigue