

Keeping it Clean: Controlling Mildew¹

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Mildew is a mold that can grow and cause damage to your health and home. You should be concerned about mildew because it makes respiratory problems, like asthma, worse.

- Mildew is easy to recognize. It has a musty odor and black fuzzy discoloration. It can also be brownish or reddish in color.
- Mildew grows best in moist warm air, like we have in Florida.
- It grows well on damp clothing, in bathrooms and other places where there is moisture.
- Cut the hem off of the plastic shower curtain so drops of water will drip off. Stretch the shower curtain out so it will dry instead of sticking together.
- Take shorter showers and use cooler water. Steam wets the ceiling and the walls.
- Open closet doors so air will circulate. Do not hang soiled clothes in closets. Dirt and soil attract bugs.
- Remove food stains from furniture as quickly as possible.

To keep mildew from growing:

- Clean showers/tub weekly or more often so mildew cannot grow on soap scum and moisture.
- Dry off the shower walls after a shower so water will not cling to the walls.
- Hang damp towels where air will circulate so that they will dry quickly.
- Do not let damp or wet clothes lay around. Dry them before putting them in the clothes hamper.

- Use fans to circulate the air.
- Keep shoes dry and clean.

If you have mildew look for ways to get rid of it

- For clothes with mildew stains use 2 tablespoons of liquid chlorine bleach with 1 quart of water. Sponge or soak for 5 to 15 minutes, then rinse. Or for a washer load of clothes, add 1 cup of chlorine bleach in the wash water.

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- For clothing that chlorine bleach will damage use non-chlorine bleach and soak the garment(s) for 30 minutes or longer, then rinse.
- Clean the shower with chlorine bleach. (Open the window for ventilation when using chlorine bleach. Do not mix chlorine bleach with any other cleaning product.)
- Place musty bedding in the sunshine for several hours. If mildew remains, sponge with a cloth moistened with 1 cup rubbing alcohol and 1-cup water, then dry thoroughly.