

Ongoing Moisture Management for Mold Control in Panama

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Management of moisture in your home or apartment is the most important factor in ongoing control and management of mold growth.

There are hundreds of thousands of different types of mold. They are living organisms that grow naturally, particularly in warm, damp, humid conditions as in Panama. Even more so in indoor conditions where there is little air movement.



Often called “mildew”, we can only see or smell mold when there is a large quantity. Mold can grow almost anywhere: on walls, ceilings, carpets, or furniture.

Mold produces “spores,” tiny particles that float through the air. These can sometimes cause health problems. Mold does not affect everyone, and different people are affected differently when mold is breathed or inhaled.

People who are allergic to mold may get watery eyes, runny or stuffed noses, itching, headaches, and may have difficulty breathing. Mold can often trigger asthma attacks. Some molds produce toxins (poisons) known as mycotoxins that may be hazardous if people are exposed to large amounts of these molds.

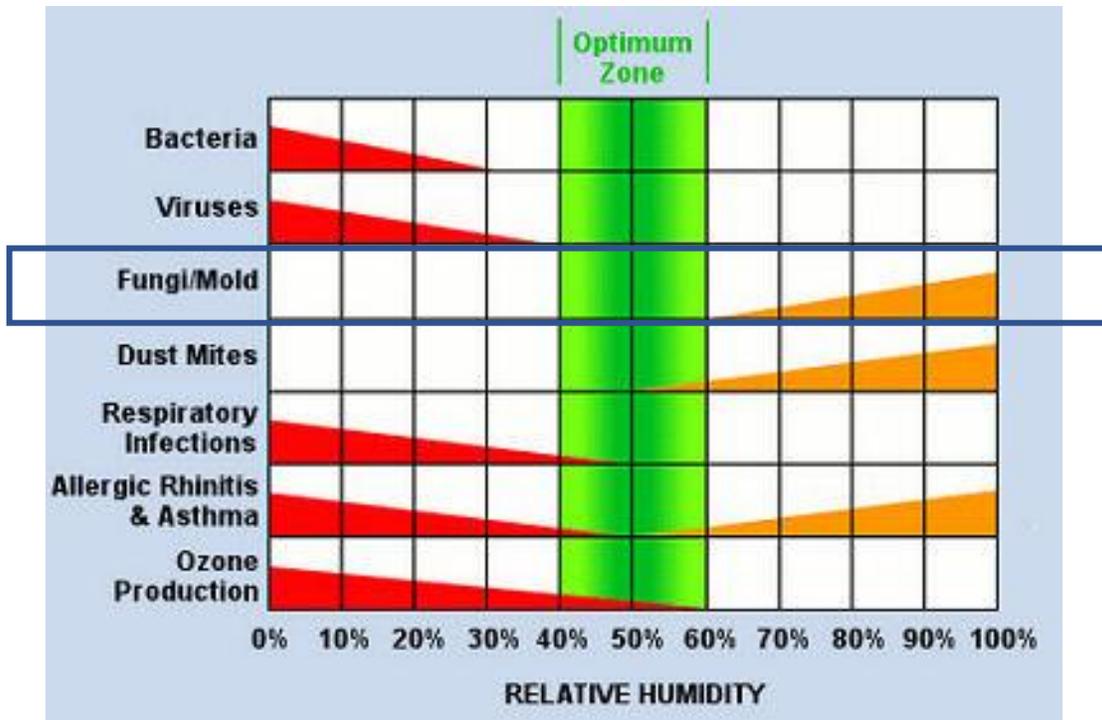
A treatment or application with Concrobium Mold Control will leave on the surface a microbial layer of Concrobium to retard ongoing mold growth. But if there is excess relative humidity in the air or sufficient surface moisture the mold will overpower the microbial protection layer, take hold and prosper again. This is why moisture management is critical.

Factors Affecting Mold Growth

Environmental factors that affect the growth of mold include humidity, temperature, oxygen and the presence of a food source for the fungus. When these conditions are met, mold will thrive and spread rapidly.

Humidity (moisture in the air) is the most important environmental factor affecting mold formation. Mold requires water to grow, whether this is damp surfaces, condensation or moisture in the air.

Mold starts to grow at moisture levels (relative humidity levels) above 55% and mold growth will thrive when relative humidity levels are between 70 and 90 percent.



Humidity or wetness is often elevated inside a residence or commercial space because of;

- water leaks, from pipes and drains
- rain leaking through doors, windows or other openings
- wet walls caused by poor exterior sealant (paint) on exterior walls
- spills from bathtubs or showers
- hanging wet clothes and towels in areas that has little air circulation
- condensation on walls or ceilings that are colder than normal because of air conditioning

Moisture Management

Following are some steps that can be taken by the homeowner for moisture management.

1. Air Circulation

- Try and set up conditions inside your home or office for good air circulation.
- do not jam pack closets with clothes, allow some space for air circulation
- periodically open drawers, closets and storage rooms
- where appropriate use a ceiling fan or portable fan to promote air circulation

2. Repair Water / Rain Leaks

- Repair faucet, water supply pipe and drain leaks, especially under cupboards and closed spaces
- Repair water leaks from rain entering through doors, windows or other exterior wall openings

3. Be Careful About Drying Clothes and Towels Indoors

- If drying clothes and or towels indoors be sure that there is plenty of exterior air flow to help carry the excess moisture outside the residence
- Be sure that gas or electric clothes drier are either directly vented outdoors or have lots of exterior air circulation and the moisture is not being pumped into the home or residence. Clothes driers can significantly increase indoor humidity levels

4. Wise use of Air Conditioning

- Air conditioner operation helps reduce moisture and temperature indoors but sometimes can also create condensation issues
- Be aware that running an a/c unit for a period of time will cool wall and ceiling surfaces and if then shut and a window is opened the incoming moist air will condense on the cool surfaces, creating an environment for mold to grow.

5. Desiccants

- For small enclosed spaces desiccants such as Damp Rid or Concrobium Moisture Grabbers will help to pull moisture from the air inside that space

6. Dehumidifiers

- For general humidity management indoors, a portable dehumidifier will be of great help
- Dehumidifiers are rated by how many pints of moisture they will typically be able to remove from the air in one day. A “50 Pint” rated dehumidifier will theoretically remove 50 pints of water from the air in one day
- For a small / medium 2-3-bedroom house or apartment, usually a 50-pint rated unit should be sufficient in helping to reduce the humidity level. For larger homes or office, it is better to have multiple units.
- Look for a dehumidifier that has an external drain hose connection. You can then attach a garden hose and run this hose to a floor drain or outdoors. This will prevent the dehumidifier from automatically shutting off when the small water collection tank is full. And save you from the regular task of emptying the tank down a sink.
- If you are able to keep bedroom and storage rooms open and promote free air circulation, one dehumidifier will generally pull the moisture from multiple rooms.
- We have found that PanaFoto stocks the Frigidaire brand in a small (30 liter), medium (50 liter) and large capacity (70 liter) models. All these units have humidistats, two-speed fans, timers and an external hose connection so you can run to a convenient floor drain. Prices are in the \$200 range and up.

Conclusion

Moisture management is one of the most critical considerations in the control and management of mold in residences and offices. There are numerous methods available. Mold Control Panama can provide further assistance and consultation.

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	Frigidaire 70 Pint Capacity Dehumidifier	Frigidaire 50 Pint Capacity Dehumidifier	Frigidaire 30 Pint Capacity Dehumidifier
AC			
Air CFM (High)	182	182	124
Bucket Full Indication	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bucket Style	Front Pull Out	Front Pull Out	Front Pull Out
Container Capacity - Pints	13.1	13.1	7.6

Electrical Specifications

Amps (Cool)	6.7	4.8	3.2
Horsepower (Cool)	1.00	0.71	0.43
Plug Type	5-15P	5-15P	5-15P
Power Cord Length	6' (6-1/2')	6' (6-1/2')	6' (6-1/2')
Voltage Rating	115V 60Hz	115V 60Hz	115V 60Hz
Watts (Cool)	745	530	320



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