



Biological Pollutants

Tips to reduce exposure to biological pollutants

Biological pollutants is a larger categorical group that includes: mold, dust mites (microscopic animals that feed on skin flakes), pet dander (animal skin flakes), cockroaches, rodents and other pests or insects, viruses, and bacteria. Many of these biological contaminants are small enough to be inhaled.

Biological pollutants are, or are produced by, living organisms and therefore are most commonly found in areas that provide food and moisture. Wet areas such as cooling coils, humidifiers, condensate pans, or unvented bathrooms are favorable to mold growth and areas where dust collects such as draperies, bedding, and carpet are optimal for accumulation of other biological contaminants.

Majority of biological pollutants are responsible for triggering allergic reactions and some types of asthma. However, some molds and mildews release disease-causing toxins and infectious illnesses, such as influenza, measles, and chicken pox are also transmitted through the air. Symptoms of health problems caused by biological pollutants include sneezing, watery eyes, coughing, shortness of breath, dizziness, lethargy, fever, and digestive problems.

Tips to reduce exposure to biological pollutants:

- To deter pet dander, keep all pets with fur or feathers out of the house if possible. The next best step is keeping them out of bedrooms.
- Wash pets weekly.
- Wash bedding and blankets once a week in hot (at least 130-140 degrees F) water to control dust mites.
- To prevent mold and dust mites, keep relative humidity in homes between 40-50% year round. This may require use of dehumidifiers and air conditioning units.
- Reduce moisture in the home by using ventilation at the source of any moisture. When showering or washing dishes use an exhaust fan or open a window.
- For good overall moisture control, use low speed continuous ventilation, such as a centrally run mechanical ventilation system installed by a qualified contractor.
- Make sure kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans as well as clothes dryers vent outside to keep moisture levels down.
- To prevent cockroaches, insects, and other pests, limit spread of food around the house; especially in bedrooms.
- Keep food and garbage in closed containers.

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