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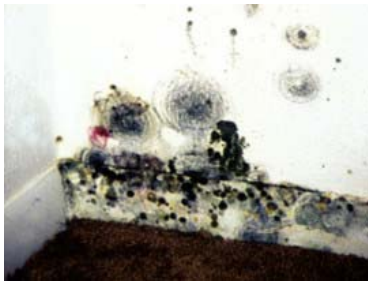
First Comes Rain, Then Comes Mold

How to combat mold growth during damp summer weather.

By [Michelle Iskowitz](#) | [Email the author](#) | June 29, 2011 | [Print](#)

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Mold is a nasty, four-letter word when it's found anywhere in the home.

And with higher-than-average rainfall this year, conditions are ideal for mold to thrive. According to Tom Skilling, monthly rainfall out of Midway airport as of June 27 is 7.29 inches—almost twice the June average of 3.29 inches. Overall, 2011 has seen an increase of 6.5 inches of rain over the average.

With that much precipitation, Darien residents are increasing their efforts to prevent moisture from causing mold damage in homes, particularly basements and crawl spaces.

Darien resident Pat Jurinek of [New Horizon Homes Builder, Inc.](#) has been in the business for more than 20 years. While mold has never been an issue in the homes they've built, New Horizon has advice for homeowners.

"We always recommend people putting a dehumidifier in the basement and to run it from April to October," Jurinek said. "Then they can rest easy that their air-conditioning will run more efficiently throughout the home and the basement will remain dry."

The appearance of mold on paper, wood, drywall, carpet, upholstery, paint, wallpaper and ceiling tiles is unsettling to be sure, but just overseeing its removal without remedying the cause is insufficient.

Marty O'Hara from [O'Hara True Value Hardware](#), who noted increased dehumidifier sales after the recent storms, said that customers often seek advice for dealing with moisture problems most commonly found in basements.

"First and foremost the area needs to be dried quickly," explained O'Hara, "using a combination of fans, dehumidifiers and moisture-absorbing products, such as DampRid."

If mold appears, as stated earlier, fixing the source of the problem is imperative, but there is also personal safety to consider when cleaning the site.

O'Hara said many clients purchase protective filter masks, safety glasses and gloves to avoid exposure and breathing in mold during the removal process.

He also said he agrees with Jurinek's recommendation to utilize dehumidifiers in basements.

"Even in the absence of water damage, they make a difference in musty basements, and most times a stale odor is eliminated by regular usage," O'Hara said.

Mold isn't just an aesthetic problem. It can cause health woes, as well.

The Centers for Disease Control cites a 2004 Institute of Medicine Study and IWorld Health Organization literature from 2009 that supports a link between large amounts of mold and mild to severe reactions, including headache, nasal congestion and respiratory complications.

The CDC lists guidelines to restrict mold growth, including:

- Keep humidity levels between 40 and 60 percent in the home.
- Use dehumidifiers and air-conditioners.
- Fix roof, wall and plumbing leaks.
- Remove water-logged carpets and dry flooded areas within 24-48 hours after occurrence.
- Make sure exhaust fans are installed in areas of high humidity such as kitchens and bathrooms.

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