

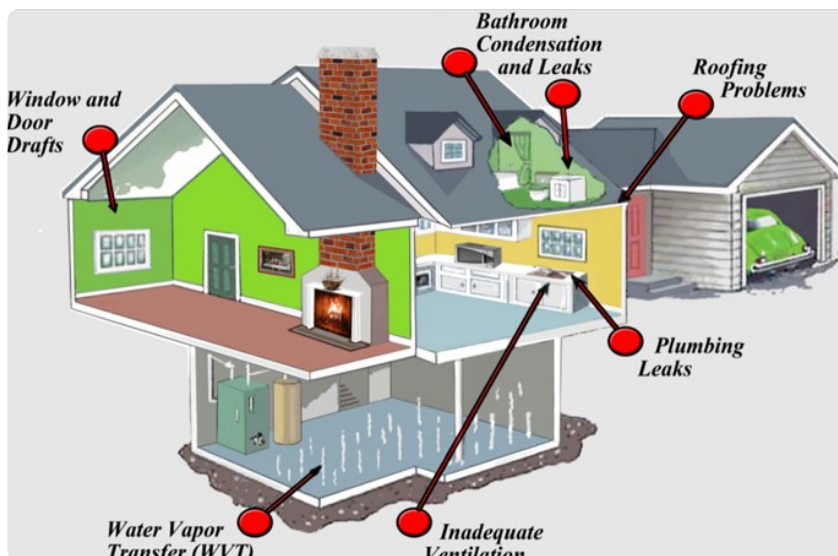
# Keep it dry: How to stop mold growth by first controlling moisture in your home



## Myth vs. fact:

- **MYTH:** Only harsh chemicals (like bleach) will clean up mold.
- **FACT:** Warm soapy water can remove mold spores.
  
- **MYTH:** I can't stop mold from growing in my home.
- **FACT:** Keeping humidity levels with thermostat between 30 and 50%, fixing and cleaning up any leaks right away, and improving air circulation and ventilation by using fans will help prevent mold growth.
  
- **MYTH:** Air purifiers are all safe to use and can help address mold concerns.
- **FACT:** Not all air purifiers are the same and some can produce ozone, which is a respiratory irritant to sensitive people. Use purifiers that have a HEPA filter to help filter molds.

## Moisture can lead to mold growth from these areas:



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## Steps to reduce humidity, moisture and mold issues:

- Use bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans for 20 minutes after using rooms.
- Dryers and other appliances should be vented to the outside of the home.
- Run dehumidifier to reduce humidity and keep setting between 30 and 50%.
- Fix leaks within 72 hours to prevent mold growth (like drippy faucets).
- Slope the ground (outside) away from foundation.
- Install gutter down spout extensions to move moisture away from the foundation.
- Use HEPA filtered air purifiers to help remove mold spores and fragments from the home.



## Dos and don'ts for healthy and safe homes:

### For hard surfaces like windowsills, door frames, floors, wood trim, toys, etc.

1. Use a vacuum on the surface, ideally with one that has a HEPA filter to remove any surface mold.
2. Wear gloves when cleaning.
3. If using rags, use at least 2 per room. Prepare spray bottle with soap & water OR fill bucket #1 with soap & water & #2 with clean water. You may use wet wipes instead of rags and buckets.
4. Wet the rag & wash surfaces well, dip 2nd rag in rinse water & wipe down washed surfaces. Empty water into toilet & refill buckets after each room. Repeat. If using wet wipes, dispose of them safely.

### For carpeting and/or upholstered furniture

1. Steam cleaning surfaces to re-move settled dust and mold a few times each year or as needed.
  2. Clean surfaces with a HEPA filtered vacuum on a daily and weekly basis.
  3. Wash ANY removable covers on couches, chairs, or curtains in warm to hot soapy water once a month or as needed.
- \* Dispose of any items not easily cleanable or damaged.
- \* For areas you are not comfortable cleaning, refer to EPA or CDC guidance for mold cleanup.

If you have questions that are not answered here, please visit [Mid-America Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit \(MAPEHSU\) Children's Mercy Kansas City webpage](#) at [cmkc.link/MAPEHSU](https://cmkc.link/MAPEHSU) for further guidance. If you cannot find answers to your questions online, call our PEHSU hotline at **(800) 421-9916** (March 2022).

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