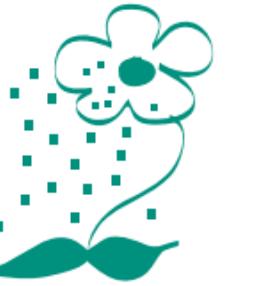


Common Sense in ALLERGY & ASTHMA



Robert E. Coifman, M.D.
Board Certified Adult &
Pediatric Allergist



Hold the Mold

The major outdoor allergens in South Jersey from October to mid-March are molds. They're there to do the job of recycling dead vegetation back into soil. Molds grow indoors where there's been flooding, leaks or water seepage, excessive use of humidifiers or in carpet on concrete slab floors. The only time there's no mold in local outdoor air is when the ground is frozen or covered with snow: If you have chronic respiratory congestion that improves when there's a hard freeze, you're probably allergic to mold.

As with other allergies, avoidance of the cause is the simplest and safest treatment when it's practical. For problems caused by indoor mold exposure, controls can include such measures as

ground water diversion and moving out of carpeted basement apartments. Avoiding indoor mold may not be practical if the source is at work and you can't change your workplace environment. It's hard to avoid outdoor mold in a rural area with lots of dead vegetation.

Skin tests and allergy vaccines are available for many common allergenic molds. Allergy shots are the only form of treatment proven to reduce allergic reactivity to many substances in the environment when avoidance isn't practical. Medicines only treat symptoms.

The EPA website has practical guidelines and advice for both homeowners and employers interested in indoor mold control.

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Millville 856.825.4100

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Web Site: www.aasj.com

E-mail: aasj@aasj.com

Individually customized allergy testing, serum, and treatment plans



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