



# MOLD & WATER DAMAGE

## The Hidden Public Health Crisis

**Americans are suffering from a silent and insidious problem they**

**can't see.** It is estimated that mold and indoor dampness affect 1 out of 2 homes in North America, causing a slew of serious and preventable health issues, which is responsible for billions of dollars in annual healthcare costs.

Mold – along with radon, asbestos, and lead – is a critical indoor air pollutant. It grows in damp and water-damaged homes and buildings and can result in serious health problems. It is caused by household water damage, flawed construction practices, poor ventilation, storms, and floods. Mold can be toxic when inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or ingested.

**WE SPEND**  
up to **90%**  
**OF OUR TIME**  
**INDOORS.**

### Health Problems Associated with Exposure to Mold (to name a few):

- Asthma
- Autoimmune diseases
- Birth defects
- Skin rashes
- Cancer
- Alzheimer's
- Premature puberty
- Chronic liver & kidney diseases
- Nausea
- Respiratory and eye irritation
- Non-respiratory issues, including carcinogenic & neurological effects
- Immunosuppression
- Lung inflammation
- ADHD
- Fatigue

It is estimated  
**MOLD & DAMPNESS**  
AFFECTS  
**1 out of 2**  
**HOMES**  
in North America.

**Today, we are experiencing an epidemic of water damage that leads to mold growth.**

Climate change events such as more frequent flooding exacerbate mold problems and disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.



There are  
**NO EPA  
REGULATIONS**  
or standards for  
**airborne mold  
contaminants.**

Consumers are left to fend for themselves and pay for expensive clean-ups out of their own pockets or continue to be exposed to dangerous toxins. Tackling mold will require a multi-pronged effort by legislators at the state and local levels to implement health-protective policies. (See p. 9 of the full Policy Brief for detailed solutions to this problem)

## By The Numbers



**21%**  
of **ALL U.S. ASTHMA CASES**  
are caused by **mold exposure**

**ONLY 7** states have **licensure** or **certification programs** for mold remediators

**10** states have **no laws** pertaining to mold and/or dampness in any kind of building

**ASTHMA ALONE**  
from indoor mold & dampness **COSTS**  
**\$14-38**  
**BILLION**  
**ANNUALLY**  
in health care  
(hospital visits, meds,  
doctor visits, ER)

**HOMES**  
of families living  
below the  
poverty line  
are more than  
**2X**  
likely to  
have mold

**47%**  
of North American  
homes  
have indoor  
**DAMPNESS  
& MOLD**

**YOUR  
HOME**  
shouldn't make  
you sick.  
**We're fighting  
so it doesn't.**

## What's the Problem? What Can We Do?

- There are inadequate laws and protections for preventing mold exposure.
- There are inconsistent or flawed construction standards for builders to prevent mold, such as requiring moisture-resistant building materials.
- Unlike other indoor air contaminants – including radon, asbestos, and lead – no permissible exposure levels or thresholds have been established for mold.
- There is a lack of federal resources to help low-income households with inspection and remediation efforts.
- Accredited industry standards for mold inspectors and remediators need to be adopted so that all practitioners are certified or licensed.
- Public awareness campaigns and education are needed to protect the public from the dangers of mold.

**TOGETHER,**  
we can  
**save lives,**  
**reduce human**  
**suffering** and  
**return billions**  
of dollars back  
to the economy.



CHANGE THE AIR  
FOUNDATION

**For more information,** refer to the full Policy Brief: "Promoting Policy Solutions for Household Dampness and Mold: Strategies for Protecting Our Health."

[changetheairfoundation.org](http://changetheairfoundation.org)

Change the Air Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving indoor air quality for all through policy change, research funding and public education.