

HOUSING AND WELLNESS PROGRAM

A Comprehensive Wellness Guide for **Healthy Homes**

MOULD



First Nations Housing
Professionals Association

L'Association des professionnels de
l'habitation des Premières Nations



Home

Prioritizing the wellness of the home is key to creating safe and supportive space for individuals and families. A home is more than just a physical space; it's a place of comfort, security, and belonging.

Creating a guide focused on supporting the wellness of the home is essential for promoting the overall well-being of its occupants. This guide offers practical tips and resources to strengthen various aspects of home wellness. By supporting the health of our homes, we also promote the physical and mental well-being of everyone who lives there.

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Acknowledgement

The **First Nations Housing Professionals Association (FNHPA)** is delighted to introduce the Housing and Wellness Program, aimed at offering crucial information and guidance to First Nations individuals residing on reserve or engaged in housing-related roles. This initiative delivers educational programs, tools, and resources tailored for First Nations housing staff, residents, and youth. Through the implementation of this program, our aim is to address housing, health, and safety concerns holistically.



MOULD

Mould is a type of fungus that grows in moist environments and can develop in different areas of your home. It spreads through airborne spores, which can quickly lead to new growth if moisture is present.

Common sources include:

- Excess moisture
- High humidity
- Water leaks
- Condensation
- Flooding
- Poor ventilation
- Damp basements or crawl spaces
- Everyday activities like cooking, bathing, and drying laundry

Recognizing and addressing these sources is key to preventing mould and maintaining a healthy home.

Disclaimer: This guide provides general information intended to support home wellness, safety, and well-being. Each First Nation may have its own housing policies, programs, bylaws, and community guidelines. Please refer to local policies and community resources for the specific rules, responsibilities, and supports that apply to your home.

Health Impacts

Prolonged exposure to mould can affect both physical and mental health. When mould issues are ongoing or not addressed, these impacts may increase over time.

Allergic reactions

Sneezing, a runny or blocked nose, itchy or watery eyes, skin irritation, and throat irritation. Symptoms may be worse for people with allergies or asthma.

Breathing problems

Mould can trigger or worsen asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory conditions, causing coughing, wheezing, or chest tightness.

Sinus issues

Exposure to mould spores may lead to sinus congestion, facial pain, headaches, and postnasal drip.

Fungal infections

People with weakened immune systems may be at higher risk of infections affecting the lungs, skin, or other areas.

Potential toxic effects

Some moulds can produce substances that may contribute to immune, respiratory, or neurological symptoms in certain individuals.

Increased stress and anxiety

Ongoing concerns about health, housing conditions, and safety can lead to heightened stress or anxiety.

Sleep disruption and fatigue

Poor air quality, odours, or physical symptoms may interfere with sleep, leading to ongoing tiredness and irritability.

Low mood and irritability

Persistent discomfort and feeling unwell can contribute to low mood, frustration, or emotional strain.

Reduced sense of comfort and safety

When a home no longer feels healthy, it can affect emotional well-being and create feelings of loss of control or insecurity.



While the health impacts of mould can be concerning, many risks can be reduced through early action and regular home maintenance. Identifying moisture issues, improving ventilation, and addressing mould growth promptly can help protect your health and maintain a safe and comfortable living environment.

Mould Prevention

Here are some practical ways to help prevent mould growth in your home:

Control humidity levels

Use dehumidifiers or air conditioners to keep indoor humidity between 30-50%, especially in moisture-prone areas like bathrooms, kitchens, and basements.

Monitor indoor humidity

Use a hygrometer to track humidity levels. If levels are high, take action using fans or dehumidifiers.

Increase ventilation

Open windows when weather allows to bring in fresh air and reduce indoor moisture.

Use exhaust fans

Run fans when cooking, showering, or doing laundry to remove excess moisture. Make sure fans vent to the outside, not into walls or attics.

Address leaks promptly

Repair plumbing, roof, or window leaks as soon as possible to prevent water damage and mould growth.

Maintain cleanliness

Regularly clean damp areas such as bathrooms and kitchens. Pay attention to shower curtains, tile grout, and sink seals.

Manage outdoor drainage

Ensure water drains away from your home's foundation. Keep gutters and downspouts clear.

Seal and insulate

Seal gaps in windows, doors, and walls. Proper insulation can reduce condensation and help prevent mould.



Mould Detection and Removal

If you suspect mould growth in your home, acting quickly can help protect your health and living space. Here are some steps you can take:

Inspect the area

- Conduct a visual inspection of your home, paying close attention to areas prone to moisture buildup, such as bathrooms, kitchens, basements, and around windows.
- Look for visible signs of mould growth, including discolouration on walls, ceilings, or floors, as well as musty odours, which may indicate hidden mould.

Document your findings

- Take photos and write down details about where the mould is located, the size of the affected area, and any noticeable odours or health symptoms.

Address the issue promptly

- **If you rent:** Notify your landlord or property manager as soon as possible and share your documentation.
- **If you own your home:** Contact a certified mould inspector or remediation professional for an assessment.

Get a professional assessment

- If the mould appears widespread or you are unsure of the severity, a professional can assess air quality and identify moisture sources to determine the extent of the issue.

Coordinate remediation

- Whether you are working with a landlord or managing it yourself, make sure qualified professionals carry out mould removal when needed. Proper remediation helps prevent future growth.

Temporary relocation, if necessary

- In cases of severe mould contamination or extensive remediation, temporary relocation may be needed to support safety and well-being during the process.

Schedule a follow-up

- After remediation, inspect the area again to confirm the mould has been addressed. Continue monitoring for signs of moisture or new mould growth.





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