Mold

What is Mold?
Mold is a type of fungus that is present in our natural environment. Mold spores, which are tiny microscopic ‘seeds’, can be found virtually everywhere, including in homes, and are a part of the general dust found in homes. These spores can grow on building materials and furnishings if conditions are correct. Excess moisture is the critical factor in any indoor mold problem. Eventually, the moisture and mold will damage what it is growing on, which may include both the building materials and personal belongings. The key to preventing mold growth is to prevent moisture problems.

What does mold need to grow?
Mold only needs a few simple things to grow and multiply:
- Moisture
- Nutrients (food)
Of these, controlling excess moisture is the key to preventing and stopping indoor mold growth.

What are the health concerns?
Health effects from exposure to mold can vary greatly depending on the person and the amount of mold in their home. The type of health symptoms that may occur include coughing, wheezing, nasal and throat conditions. People with asthma or allergies who are sensitive to mold may notice their asthma or allergy symptoms worsen. Individuals with severely weakened immune system who are exposed to moldy environments are at risk of developing serious fungal respiratory infections.

Some types of mold can produce chemical compounds called mycotoxins although they do not always do so. In some circumstances, the toxins produced by indoor mold may cause health problems. Most known cases of illness from mycotoxins are caused by ingesting (eating) them not inhaling (breathing) them. All indoor mold growth should be removed promptly, no matter what type(s) of mold is present or whether it can produce toxins.

For more information on cleaning and testing for mold you can contact:
Wisconsin State laboratory of Hygiene: 1-800-422-4618
Archer Services: 715-483-9922