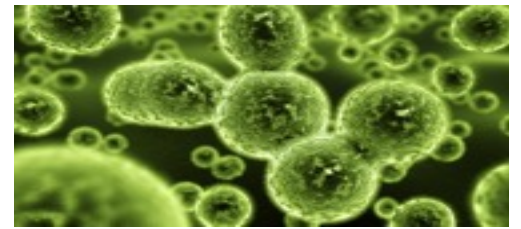


# Biological Pollutants: Health Effects and What You Can Do



Common biological pollutants which can be found in the home include the following:

- Mold
- Mildew
- Fungi
- Bacteria
- Dust mites

## How do pollutants get into the home?

Some biological pollutants, such as pollen, are generated outside the home and brought indoors. Mold, mildew, bacteria, and fungi are generated indoors, often in humid areas like bathrooms or kitchens, and release spores into the air. These spores can travel throughout the house and create new mold colonies where they land. Pollen can enter the home through open windows or be carried in by pets. Dust mites are usually found in the bedroom. Dust mites and animal dander can become airborne and spread with vacuuming or dusting.

## What are the health effects of these pollutants?

Allergic reactions are the most common health problems caused by biological pollutants. Symptoms include runny nose and sneezing, watery eyes, nasal congestion, coughing, itching, wheezing, head ache, fatigue, and difficulty breathing. Biological pollutants, especially dust mites, can also trigger asthma attacks.



1469 Park Ave, San Jose,  
CA 95126

Office: (408) 998-5865

Fax: (408) 998-0578

Email: [info@lungsrus.org](mailto:info@lungsrus.org)



Common areas for mold and mildew to thrive are in kitchens and bathrooms. Dust mites are often found in bedrooms so it is important to clean sheets, blankets, and pillows regularly. Pets can bring outside invaders into the home. Make sure to bathe your pets if they sleep near you or your family.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, moldy areas less than ten square feet can be handled by the home owner. If the mold spans a larger area or if there has been significant water damage, turn to the EPA guide: Mold Remediation which is available for free by calling the EPA Indoor Air Quality Information Clearinghouse at (800) 438-4318, or on the internet at: [www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/mold\\_remediation.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/molds/mold_remediation.html).

**Information provided by the Federal Citizen Information Center, U.S. General Services Administration**

### How to tackle the problem:

Watch for the signs of mold and mildew growth. Areas where there is standing water, moisture, or water stains can be growing mold. If your pets spend most of their time indoors, consider giving them weekly baths.

### Other tips for inside the home

- Keep basements, bathrooms, kitchens, and other rooms clean and dry. Use disinfectant to clean surfaces, like the countertop near kitchen or bathroom sinks, and make sure to minimize moisture around these problem areas.
- Humidifiers, dehumidifiers, and air conditioning units should have their filters regularly cleaned and disinfected with chlorine bleach.
- Make sure there is ventilation in areas where moisture tends to build.
- Consider replacing carpeting with hardwood, tile, or linoleum and use area rugs which can be removed and cleaned.
- Use high efficiency vacuums to minimize the spread of dust and dander when cleaning.