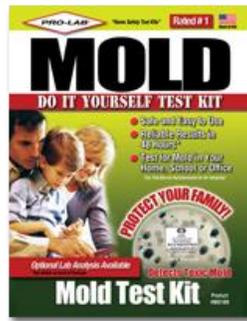


Mold Test Kits



When managing mold-related issues, MCPS follows guidelines and best practices provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other credible organizations within the indoor air quality community. With regard to mold test kits, EPA advocates against their use and states that:

- “Sampling for mold should be conducted by professionals who have specific experience in designing mold sampling protocols, sampling methods, and interpreting results.
- Sample analysis should follow analytical methods recommended by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH), or other professional organizations.”

In addition, there are a number of other reasons why mold test kits are inaccurate, lack credibility and are not endorsed by recognized industry professionals:

- **No control or comparison sample:** Mold test kits only test for the presence of mold indoors and do not provide a mechanism or control for comparing results to outdoor levels. A control sample is necessary to validate the elevation of spores and provide a meaningful reference point. In the absence of mold regulations, professionals typically compare the indoor level of mold with the outdoor level of mold.
- **Mold spores floating in air not captured:** Because mold test kits are “settling plates”, they tend to capture only the heavier spores and as a result, do not indicate a true representation of what might be in the air.
- **Dead mold spores unaccounted for:** Mold test kits do not account for dead mold spores, which cannot grow on the media, but can impact health.
- **No expiration dates:** Generally, there are no expiration dates on test kits despite the requirement that they be sterile. The media used to grow the spores may be old which would affect the accuracy and reliability of the results.
- **Shipping and handling process unregulated:** Kits being sent through the mail may be susceptible to moisture, extremes in temperature/humidity and improper handling. Such factors can lead to false positives and negatives.

Aside from these reasons, mold is present everywhere, in homes, buildings and outside air. Therefore, when a home mold test tells you that you have mold, it is not telling you anything useful since mold is everywhere. This is about as useful as setting out a plate of fruit and finding out whether mold will grow on them. Given enough time, of course it will. If you leave moist food on the kitchen counter for a few weeks, no one is surprised when mold forms on that food, and finding mold on that food does not mean that the home has a mold problem.

Sean Yarup, MPH
Environmental Team Leader