

Why Trust Anyone Else?

Can I clean mold with Bleach and water?



Bleach, is commonly believed to be an effective fungicide (mold-killer). In **ONE** situation, it may be effective: on hard, non-porous surfaces such as a countertop or shower stall, *however*, on porous surfaces such as walls, floors, ceilings, wood framing, drywall, and cabinets, it is **not** effective. In fact, it can actually feed the mold and make the problem worse. This is counterintuitive – it goes against the common thought that bleach kills germs. How can bleach feed the mold, when it is supposed to kill it? It has to do with the composition of bleach and the structure of mold.

Chlorine bleach is **mostly** water. The water in the bleach carries the active chemical ingredient known as chlorine (sodium hypochlorite), several sources, including [bleach-mold-myth](#), say that the chlorine in bleach remains on the surface of the wood and does not soak down into the wood.

The problem is Mold grows in **colonies**, sending out branches as it grows. Killing one part of the mold will not kill all the mold. Instead, the mold comes back, if it has been fed by using bleach or some other household cleaner, it comes back stronger. Be careful, anytime you so much as touch the mold or wave your hand across it you are releasing tens of thousands of spores into the air and often into your lungs, eyes, ears, on your clothing, and any surrounding surfaces like carpet and drywall. The type of mold should be determined before any clean up should take place. After you know what type of Mold you have and if you feel so inclined to clean it up yourself, please use the appropriate gear, a mold respirator, ear plugs, eye shields, etc. However, professional mold remediation is generally recommended.

How Chlorine Bleach Makes Mold Worse

The chlorine does not soak into the porous materials (wood, wallboard, ceiling tiles), but the water in the bleach does. The bleach might kill the mold that is on the surface of the wood, but because the chlorine cannot penetrate the wood, it will not kill the mold structures that are underneath the surface.

The water soaks down into the porous material to where the roots (called Rhizoids) of the mold are. Moisture is one of the few requirements mold has. Now that even more of the wood has become moist, thanks to the water in the bleach, the mold can spread into that area and continue its feast.

Using bleach on mold, is like cutting off the head (flower) of a dandelion weed while feeding the roots, and thinking that the dandelion has been killed. The dandelion will just grow more, and be stronger because it has been fed.

The Clorox® Company, OSHA, and the EPA all have determined that bleach should **NOT** be used in mold remediation. Bleach is ineffective and unsafe for cleaning up mold or killing mold. It appears to kill the mold, but just the surface mold is affected – the hidden mold underneath the surface is alive and well – now it's doing even better. The mold says, "Thanks for the food! See you in a few days!" and the surface mold will soon be back.

