UConn’s Department of Environmental Health and Safety receives many mold inquiries and have noted an increase in use of mold settling plates (petri dishes or “Do-It-Yourself” mold test kits). While these kits can be cheap and readily accessible, UConn EHS and mold professionals do not advocate for the use of mold petri dishes. Why?

- Mold spores are ubiquitous. They are naturally occurring both indoors and outdoors and vary with the season and the region.
- It’s normal and expected to have mold spores indoors; mold growth indoors is not normal or expected.
- Because mold spores exist naturally, it would be rare not to get mold growth on the petri dishes!
- They give a **FALSE** impression of there being a mold problem in a space when there is not.
- These mold petri dish test kits select for and support mold growth by providing the 3 needs for mold; an organic food source, moisture, and a surface to grow on.
- There are no accepted standards for conducting these tests and interpreting the results.
- It’s easy for dishes to be contaminated during the ‘sample’ period.
- What adds to normal indoor mold spores? Food left out or in an uncovered trash container, plants, wet towels or damp clothing, pets, condensation/moisture on surfaces, dust on surfaces, humidifiers not maintained properly, etc.

**What mold growth on a petri dish ACTUALLY means?**

- You don’t live or work in a sterile clean room.
- You too can grow mold from airborne spores! (Though this would happen with any food left out, like a piece of bread)
- Most importantly, **you are now creating a mold growth problem and potential exposure in your space by encouraging it to grow**!

**What mold growth on a petri dish CANNOT identify?**

- If a space has a mold growth problem – remember mold spores are everywhere and even under normal conditions, they will grow on the petri dishes!
- The source of the mold spores contributing to the growth on the plate - Normal conditions? Excessive dust? Poor housekeeping? Pets or plants? Visible mold growth present in the space?
What can you do instead?

- Clean personal items or spaces exhibiting visible mold growth (i.e., refrigerators)
- Eliminate moisture to prevent mold growth.
  - Clean spills promptly
  - Report leaks, eliminate condensation or high humidity.
- Be cognizant of housekeeping practices, **dust is perfect breeding grounds for mold spores!**
- Report visible mold growth on building materials (ceilings, walls, etc.)

If you see suspect mold growth or experienced water intruding into your room; do not lose time with sampling yourself. **Please place a work order with Facilities Operations as soon as possible.** UConn follows EPA and OSHA’s mold guidance to remove any visible mold growth and eliminate moisture sources that would lead to future growth.

**Resources:** Information regarding mold can be found on the EHS’ Occupation Safety Website at [https://ehs.uconn.edu/occupational-health-and-safety/](https://ehs.uconn.edu/occupational-health-and-safety/)

Additional Information can be found at:
- CTDPH – [Mold](https://ehs.uconn.edu/)
- CTDPH – [Indoor Air Quality Testing Should Not Be The First Move](https://ehs.uconn.edu/)

**Contact Val Brangan or James Blum at EHS (x3613 or ehs@uconn.edu) if you have further health and safety questions or concerns.**