

Facts About DIY Mold Test Kits

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/>

Additional Information can be found at:

CTDPH – [Mold](#)

CTDPH – [Indoor Air Quality Testing Should Not Be The First Move](#)

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