

Black Slime Mold or Fungus in Bathrooms and Kitchens (Copied from HHPSD.com Latest News 2/4/2019)

You may have noticed “black slime” growing around areas of your home that are often exposed to water, such as the faucet, sink, shower, or toilet. These microbes are airborne mold and/or fungal spores that are nearly ubiquitous in the very moist, subtropical Lowcountry climate. They grow in areas where they are frequently exposed to moisture – such as sinks and toilets and faucets! These microbes are NOT contained in the drinking water, but when they land in a place that is exposed to water they can grow quickly.

There are many different strategies for eliminating this “slime”, including:

Clean affected areas with a bleach solution. Be careful not to scratch any smooth surfaces as this makes it easier for microbes to attach.

Eliminate leaks that provide a constant source of water.

Make sure that susceptible areas are dry after use.

Maintain good ventilation.

Clean away any lime scale on vulnerable surfaces.

Thoroughly clean aerators and replace ones that are old or rusty.

Spray areas with white vinegar and let soak before rinsing.

Look into purchasing antimicrobial sink fixtures.

Microbial growth in your household fixtures is a common issue; but can be solved with a little elbow grease!

Key points:

Your tap water is safe to drink.

PSD tap water annually passes thousands of tests by both our own award-winning Water Quality Laboratory and independent laboratories, which are confirmed by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). The PSD’s water quality consistently meets or exceeds all state and federal water quality standards. The PSD’s Water Quality Laboratory consistently meets and exceeds all certification requirements and has been named a “Laboratory of Excellence” by the independent agency that monitors laboratory compliance under S.C. DHEC.

The black molds or fungi on your fixtures and/or in your bathroom/kitchen are not found in the drinking water – they are caused by airborne spores that are naturally occurring in our very moist, subtropical climate. If you moved to the Lowcountry from a different climate, you might not have experienced these airborne spores before.

Airborne spores can attach to clothing, shoes, bags, and pets, and be carried indoors.

Airborne spores enter your home via vents, heating and air-conditioning systems, doorways and windows.

More than 1,000 different types of airborne spores have been identified in the U.S.

Examples of airborne molds that have been found in the Lowcountry climate are: Cladosporium, Paecilomyces, Phialophora, and Aspergillus.

Remember, molds are living organisms. Just as all living things need water, so does mold. Mold can grow on almost any surface and only requires dampness and a food source.

Black molds, like other molds, will grow in places where there is moisture, such as around water leaks, windows, drain-pipes, or where there has been flooding. Black mold grows well on paper products, cardboard, ceiling tiles, and wood products. They can also grow in dust, paints, wallpaper, insulation, drywall, carpet, fabric, and upholstery.

It has been observed that black mold on faucets may be growing in the aerator that is attached to the end of the faucet. Regular cleaning, by unscrewing the aerator from the faucet and cleaning with a mild bleach solution, is recommended.

It is impractical to attempt to eliminate all indoor molds, but you can keep mold growth in check by:

Keeping humidity levels between 40% and 60%. If you are experiencing frequent problems with mold formation in your home, it may be a great idea to start using a dehumidifier in your home.

Promptly fixing leaky roofs, windows, and pipes; Thoroughly cleaning and drying after flooding;

Ventilating shower, laundry, and cooking areas; Using a non-abrasive cleaning solution with bleach, such as Soft Scrub, to clean the areas where mold is growing.