Recognizing Mold
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Moldy books are a risk to a collection. Mold spores can spread from book to book through the air.
Recognizing Mold

Why is mold a problem?
Mold can eat books!
Mold is a type of fungus. It spreads by releasing spores into the air. Under the right conditions these spores bloom and mold grows. Mold needs food in order to survive and can eat almost any organic materials – including books.
Mold exists in two states: active and dormant. Active mold is eating, growing and producing spores. Dormant mold is inactive but may reactivate if the conditions are right. For library staff, it is difficult to determine if mold is active or dormant.
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Active Mold

The mold on this bread is active mold. The mold is alive and currently producing spores. Sometimes active mold can appear powdery, like on this bread. Other times it may appear damp and slimy.
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Dormant Mold

Dormant mold can be much harder to spot than active mold. Dormant mold can appear to be a stain left on the pages or the cover of a book. The following are some tips to help determine whether or not a book has mold growing in it.
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Does the stain re-appear on adjacent pages? Many times mold can grow across or even through the pages of a book. If the stain re-appears on the adjacent pages, it is most likely mold growth.
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Color can also be an indication of mold growth. Notice that the outer cover of this book is dark blue, but there are yellow and orange stains on the inside. If the cover had gotten wet and the ink ran, the stain should be the same color as the cover.
Mold likes to form in spots. Unless it is a spore, mold doesn’t move. It grows wherever the spores were located when they settled on an object and became active.
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Sometimes mold appears as fibrous tendrils inside a book. There are many different varieties of mold, and its appearance can vary greatly in each instance.
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Here we have an example of two different types of mold in the same book. Also notice the difference between the mold in the circles and the stains from cover on the left hand side. The stains do not appear to have texture, whereas the mold does.
Unfortunately, mold does not always have such an apparent texture. The black stains on this book are mold, which has begun growing in the tiny crevices of the book’s cover.
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Frequently, mold spores will grow in these crevices and may appear to be nothing more than stains. Always bring books that may have mold on them to a staff member.
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Another helpful hint is to check the book for water damage. If the book has been wet, even if it was a long time ago, there is a greater risk of mold growth. Notice the watermark on the cover of this book, and the spots on the bottom.
One of the most common places to find mold growth is in the spine of a book. The glue that is used to bind the book to its cover was frequently made from organic materials that can sustain mold.
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Although there may not be much evidence on the surface of the book, a look inside reveals that the mold has permeated the spine of this book and is eating the glue.
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Sometimes mold can appear as a phenomenon called “Foxing”. Foxing appears as brown stains on the pages of a book. Can you determine if this is mold or foxing?
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If you guessed that this stain was mold, you were right. Foxing usually occurs evenly over the pages. Mold tends to form on either the outer edges of the pages or near the spine of the book.
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Mold can often appear as other things. For example, this mold looks like a stain from “red rot”. Red rot occurs when leather bindings dry out and become brittle and powdery. Red rot can stain your hands, clothes and even other books.
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If you look carefully you can see that this is not a stain, but mold which is growing along the outer edge of this book. Notice how the spots seem to have rough edges, as the mold grows out from center of each spot, burrowing into the cover.
Mold that appears as foxing is usually accompanied by spots at the top of the text-block. The spots have the same “branching” characteristic that appeared on the previous book. In this case the mold settled onto the top of the book while it was shelved and then grew down into the pages.
Recognizing Mold

Take a close look at the spots here. Spots like these can vary from yellowish-brown to brown, depending on how old the book is and what color the pages are.
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Also be aware that mold can transfer from one type of item to another. There is no specific type of “book mold”. Mold will consume any material it can to survive. In this picture, we see how a banana peel has become moldy and transferred that mold to the pages of this book.
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Even a wet ceiling tile can support mold growth. Report wet ceiling tiles to a full time staff member immediately. Mold spores affect our patrons and staff as well as our collection and wet ceiling tiles may fall as they become water logged.
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Mold is considered a type of damage. Do not discharge damaged materials. Do not re-shelve damaged materials.
Recognizing Mold

Sometimes patrons want to check out items that have already been damaged. If the item is moldy, DO NOT CHECK IT OUT!

If the item is physically damaged (cover missing, torn pages, etc.) be sure to stamp the item “Damaged on Charge” before checking it out. Stamping the item tells the circulation desk that the patron is not responsible for damaging the materials, and should not be billed.
Moldy Book Workflow

Once a Collection Management staff member has concluded that an item has mold on it they should take the following steps to route the item to the proper recipient.
If the item is charged to a patron please consult your billing supervisor. Otherwise check out the item to “LNGTRMPRES” user.
Moldy Book Workflow

Fill out the Preservation, Mold and Repair Ticket form. The form should be located at the circulation desk. A pdf copy is also available at:

http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/staff/access_serv/circulation/DTS_and_Preservation_tickets.pdf
Moldy Book Workflow

Print out the item’s publication record from Workflows. This will be attached to the outside of the plastic after the book is wrapped. This allows staff to see the book’s barcode and information without unwrapping the plastic.
Moldy Book Workflow

Books that have mold on them must then be wrapped in plastic. These books must be isolated to prevent the mold from spreading to the collection and affecting staff and patrons.
If you have access to the library selector for the moldy book’s subject area and believe you can receive a timely answer, please consult them about whether they wish to remediate or withdraw the title. The subject selector list can be found at: http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/about/collection_dir.shtml

If you cannot receive a timely answer please send the item to the preservation office.
If the item is to be remediated or a selector decision cannot be obtained in timely matter please mail the item in a clearly marked box to the preservation office at Alexander Library. Include the wrapped book, the problem item ticket, and the publication record. Please note on the label of the box that it contains a moldy item.

If the item is to be withdrawn, please contact the DTS office.
Thank you for viewing this mold training tutorial