

facts on biological films & moulds

what are biological films?

Biological films occur naturally in the environment. They occur when microscopic organisms (moulds and Bacteria) grow over the surface of an object. When the growth is large enough it may become visible to the naked eye. Growths can be black, brown, green or pale orange in colour, and may be seen as either small specks of colour, or as a general surface discolouration. It is sometimes possible for a black film to form on the inside of a tap.

how do they grow?

To develop biological films need warm and damp conditions, which is why they are most commonly found in kitchens and bathrooms. They can be found on walls, tiles, grouting, shower curtains and the inside of taps, sometimes causing very visible discolouration. Substances such as soaps, shampoo's, conditioners and hairsprays etc provide nutrients for their growth. Because of the high concentration of these products at hairdressers they can be found in these types of premises as well.

are they harmful to health?

Research has shown that the organisms that form biological films are not known to cause

disease, and therefore for the vast majority of people do not cause a problem. However, some opportunist bacteria can infect cuts and wounds, and some moulds can cause allergic reactions in susceptible people. So it is best to remove biological films when they appear.

what can I do about the biological films?

The growth of biological films on walls and other flat surfaces can be controlled by the use of easily available proprietary anti-mould products. These should be applied in accordance with the instructions on the label, or if uncertain consult with manufacturers.

Anti-mould grouting products are also widely available for use for tiled surfaces in kitchens and bathrooms. Shower curtains should be washed regularly to remove any discolouration and minimise the growth of biological films.

Biological film developing in taps can be cleaned with a small brush and a disinfectant of the type used for sterilising baby's bottles, before flushing the tap clear. Follow safety instructions printed on the label, or if in doubt consult the manufacturer.

