PUREPRO — RESTORATION —

FOR ACCURATE SAMPLING

How to Collect an Accurate ERMI Sample

A step-by-step protocol for CIRS patients and their clinicians — designed to eliminate the sampling errors that make most self-collected ERMIs unreliable.

PurePro Restoration — Denver, Colorado

WHY SAMPLING TECHNIQUE MATTERS

ERMI accuracy depends entirely on collecting dust that represents indoor mold reservoirs — not outdoor contamination, recent cleaning residue, or transient exposure. Poor sampling technique produces results that either miss real problems or flag phantom ones, misleading both patient and clinician.

Every step of this protocol exists to eliminate a specific source of contamination that would compromise your result. Follow it in order.

HOW MANY SAMPLES TO COLLECT

At minimum, collect:

- One outdoor control sample *collected from an exterior* surface on multiple sides of the house — for example a patio table or porch railing — to establish the ambient outdoor mold baseline.
- One indoor sample per level of the home — *main level, upstairs, basement each get their own sample.*

A single-story home typically needs 2 samples (1 outdoor + 1 indoor). A three-level home needs 4 samples (1 outdoor + 3 indoor). Order enough *ERMI kits accordingly before beginning.*

Each individual sample should represent approximately 18 square feet of wiped surface area total across the level being tested.

BEFORE YOU SAMPLE

1. Do not clean the sampled zones for at least 30 days before collection. No dusting, no wiping down surfaces above 36 inches, no aggressive vacuuming that stirs settled dust back into the air. Floor cleaning is fine — floors are not sampled.
2. Keep windows closed for the entire 30-day period before sampling. Outdoor spores that settle indoors will contaminate the indoor sample and inflate results.
3. Do not sample within 48 hours of any spray cleaning, essential oil diffusion, incense, candles, or air fresheners in the home. These leave residues on surfaces that interfere with the DNA analysis.
4. Wear clean disposable gloves throughout the entire collection. Do not touch the sampling cloth or the sampled surface with bare hands. Change gloves after every sample you collect.
5. Use *only the sampling cloth provided in the lab kit. Never substitute household products, damp cloths, or Swiffer refills — residues from unapproved materials will contaminate the sample.*
6. *Confirm you have enough kits before beginning: one per sample location, plus the outdoor control.*

Protocol note: This reflects PurePro Restoration's preferred ERMI collection method based on field experience and may differ in places from standard lab kit instructions. Use clinician judgment when needed.

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Collecting the Sample

The physical technique that produces a valid, representative dust sample.

HOW TO COLLECT THE DUST

1. Remove the sampling cloth from its sealed lab packaging with gloved hands. Do not touch the wiping surface of the cloth.
2. Wipe horizontal AND vertical surfaces that are at least 36 inches above the floor. Anything below 36 inches is too close to floor traffic, foot-carried outdoor contamination, and pet activity to represent settled indoor dust.
3. Target approximately 18 square feet of total wiped surface area per sample cloth. Combine surfaces across multiple rooms on that level to reach 18 sq ft — the goal is a representative sample of that level, not any single room.
4. Wipe with consistent pressure using overlapping strokes. Do not scrub. Do not press hard enough to grind dust into the cloth fibers.
5. Use one continuous side of the cloth throughout collection. Do not flip the cloth, do not shake it out between rooms, do not fold it, do not set it down between surfaces. Move directly from one surface to the next until the target 18 sq ft is reached.
6. Place the used cloth immediately into the lab-provided container. Seal per the kit's return instructions. Do not add anything else to the container.
7. Repeat with a fresh kit for each additional sample location (outdoor control, each additional level of the home).
8. Ship all samples the same day if possible. If not, store in a cool, dry location — never in a bathroom, kitchen, or humid area.

WHERE NOT TO SAMPLE

Avoid these surfaces — they introduce contamination that will skew the result:

- Any surface below 36 inches from the floor
- Windowsills and areas near exterior doors (outdoor spore intrusion)
- Areas near sinks, drains, or plumbing fixtures (biofilms and moisture-associated organisms)
- Floors of any kind — no floor sampling
- Recently disturbed surfaces (dusted, wiped, or vacuumed within the last 30 days)
- Kitchen counters and food-preparation zones (cleaning residues, cooking byproducts)
- Bathrooms (humidity and cleaning products interfere)

The best sampling surfaces are high, flat, and away from moisture sources — the tops of tall bookshelves, upper cabinet trim, tops of picture frames, upper edges of door casings, ceiling fan blades, and tops of tall furniture. Use surfaces that were last cleaned roughly 30–60 days ago and have not been re-cleaned since. Avoid surfaces carrying very old dust layers from many months or years of neglect, because that can overrepresent historical contamination rather than the home's current reservoir.

What an ERMI is — and what it isn't

ERMI is a pre-remediation and long-term surveillance tool. It characterizes the mold burden of a home based on settled dust over weeks or months.

It is not a valid post-remediation clearance method — a proper post-remediation ERMI would require 4–6 weeks of undisturbed dust accumulation after clearance to produce a meaningful result, which is why it is never used as remediation clearance during active recovery.

If your clinician has ordered ERMI as part of diagnostic workup or long-term monitoring, this guide is written for that purpose.

Results should always be reviewed with your clinician, IEP, or remediator — not interpreted in isolation.

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