



## Mold is Toxic: What You Need Know

**W**hen Michael suddenly became sick with a very high fever, diarrhea and wheezing, his doctor did not know what was wrong with him. A friend suggested that his parents run a special blood test. After Jim and Sarah built their dream house, they decided to have a much-wanted third child. By six months old they knew Andrew was just “not right.” At age two: diagnosis, autism. The culprit in both cases: black mold.

### What is Black Mold?

Black mold is a slimy, greenish black fungus that produces toxins. Approximately 25 million Americans suffer from mold “allergies” to some of the thousands of different varieties that invade our homes.

Under ideal growing conditions black mold fungus reproduces into toxic, microscopic spores called mycotoxins which are potent inhibitors of DNA, RNA, and protein synthesis, and can demyelinate nerve fibers, leading to autoimmune disease.

### Where Does Black Mold Grow?

Molds require moisture, oxygen, warmth and an organic food source to grow. In post-Katrina New Orleans, they colonized quickly, particularly well in high-cellulose materials, such as wet wood, dry wall, carpet, wallpaper, fiberboard, ceiling tiles, thermal insulation, etc. Outdoor mold paradises include wet leaves in moist, shady areas and compost piles.

Inside, molds love moist warm areas, which may be either visible or invisible. Their protected enzyme roots actually penetrate porous construction materials, especially following storms, plumbing or roof leaks. The sidebar table shows some common mold habitats. “Sick” buildings have mold in many of these areas.

Foods are common mold sources. Fungi from foods can affect the immune system and exacerbate black mold reactions. Some, such as cheese and soy sauce are processed with fungi. Other foods, like mushrooms, are molds themselves. Others like cantaloupe and some dried fruits attract mold. Individuals who have had exposure to black mold should avoid all of these foods.

The human body, especially the warm lungs, sinus cavities and gut, is a perfect breeding ground for mold. After limited exposure, spores quickly colonize and reproduce. That’s what happened to the children in the case studies above.

### What are Symptoms of Black Mold Toxicity?

Airborne mycotoxins from black mold affect everyone, not just those who are “allergic.” Most people are unaware that they are breathing mold spores until they become sick. Leaving the affected area helps most recover. However, long-term exposure to the dangerous spores from black mold can result in chronic problems.

Reactions range from benign symptoms such as sneezing and sniffing, sinusitis, the “flu,” headaches, mild breathing difficulties, reflux, brain fog, hearing loss, bruising and dizziness, to more severe, long-lasting problems.

### SOURCES OF BLACK MOLD

- Attics with roof leaks or poor ventilation
- Basements
- Bathroom showers, tubs, & toilets
- Carpeting and padding
- Ceilings and ceiling tiles
- Closets and crawl spaces
- Drapes
- Furniture, especially upholstered
- Garbage disposal and pails
- Heating cooling equipment & ducts
- Humidifiers & vaporizers
- Mattresses
- Paint
- Paper products
- Pillows, especially foam rubber ones
- Plants
- Pools
- Rags
- Refrigerator drip trays
- Walls, wet from leaks
- Wallpaper
- Washing machine

Chronic bronchitis, heart problems, cancer, multiple sclerosis, fatigue syndrome, lupus, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple chemical sensitivity, bleeding in the lungs, digestive problems, asthma, nail fungus, and much more may point to mold. It can also be a factor in subtle learning, behavioral and attention problems, as well as in autism spectrum disorders.

The body has the ability to hold pathogenic microorganisms along the spinal cord and in the lymphatic system, where they hibernate indefinitely. If and when the immune system becomes compromised, the toxins are released, manifesting as illness and disease.

### Eliminating Black Mold

*Find and remove the source(s) of mold from:*

- leaky faucets or plumbing
- under the refrigerator and the drip tray
- under carpets
- wet walls

Because mold may be invisible, this step may require a professional. Home test kits are available, and some home inspectors are educated about mold.

*Next, prepare the home or office to prevent future mold growth.*

- dry out with a dehumidifier
- install an air filter

Clean only with products containing natural anti-fungals, such as tea tree oil and vinegar. Some people highly recommend a product called Thieves® Household cleaner, which is made from a blend of 100% natural essential oils, including clove, lemon, cinnamon bark, eucalyptus and rosemary.

### Getting Well

Mold illness is very difficult to treat, and most physicians have little education in identifying it. The same essential oils that work to kill molds in a building can be used on and in the human body.

One of the world’s experts on the subject is Dietrich Klinghardt, MD, PhD. View his protocol for neurotoxins, including black mold, go to [www.klinghardt.org/neurotoxinprotocol040406.pdf](http://www.klinghardt.org/neurotoxinprotocol040406.pdf). He uses a combination of a high protein, mineral, fluid and fatty acid diet, plus natural anti-fungals, such as garlic, cilantro and chlorella, along with fish oil, electrolytes and other substances.

Klinghardt is also a big fan of propolis, the resin that bees make along with honey. Propolis is an antifungal, antimicrobial, antibacterial substance that also boosts the immune system. Use an infuser to burn and inhale it, put it on the skin as an ointment, or take it as capsules.

### Prevention is the Best Medicine

Illness from black mold and other fungi are pervasive and can masquerade as other problems. For an extremely thorough overview of finding, cleaning and preventing indoor mold problems, visit [www.toxic-black-mold-info.com](http://www.toxic-black-mold-info.com), home of the Toxic Black Mold Information Center. A great reference book on identifying and treating molds in your home, read *The Mold Survival Guide* by Jeffrey and Connie May. Clean up your home now!