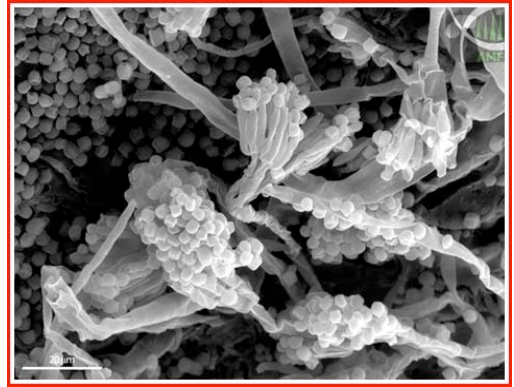


## TX News Notes - Mold!

More than you ever wanted to know

- What Trouble Mold Can Cause
- What Helps & What to Do
- What to do with a Major Problem
- A Personal Account



Molds are part of the natural environment. Outdoors, molds play a part in nature by breaking down dead organic matter such as fallen leaves and dead trees, but indoors, mold growth should be avoided. Molds reproduce by means of tiny spores; the spores are invisible to the naked eye and float through outdoor and indoor air. Mold may begin growing indoors when mold spores land on surfaces that are wet. There are many types of mold, and none of them will grow without water or moisture. [EPA]

Article: Toxic Mold Related Illnesses

Article: You've Got Mold! - Now, what can you do about it?

- What works? What doesn't work?

A Personal Saga: Removing Household Mold

- Thanks to Bill & Diane Detmer for sharing their story with us!

Article: Pillows can harbour harmful fungi

Links: "Allergy-Friendly" Products

Opinion: Mold from a Support Person's Standpoint

Article: Protecting the air we breathe

A Personal Saga: The Detmer's Saga Continues - Demolition

Article: 10 Tips for a Mold-Free House

Article: Mold Remediation Requires Specialist - Long-Term Solution May Be Elusive

It is not our intention to provide medical advice but rather to provide users with information to better understand their health and any threat that mold might present. We urge you to consult with a qualified physician for advice and for answers to your personal questions.

This information is provided as a service. Although we try to ensure that the information is as accurate as possible, we do make mistakes sometimes. Therefore, we do not guarantee the accuracy of the information and you should verify the information where possible.

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## Toxic Mold Related Illnesses



Mold, in your home, can be a very ugly sight and can ruin upholstery, clothing, and furniture. There are certain types of mold that produce toxins, which are known as toxic mold. The toxins produced by toxic mold can cause a lot of diseases, in animals and in humans. These illnesses can range from something as slight as a common cold, but in some cases, could even result in death.

Here are some of the illnesses which are related to toxic mold, and which people can suffer from if exposed to toxic mold.

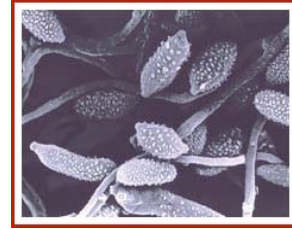
- **Allergic Reactions:** Most types of mold are known to cause allergies in humans, so also toxic mold. People who have weaker immune systems, or those who are prone to allergies because of their genetic makeup, can suffer badly from exposure to toxic mold. Allergies could result in hay fever, runny nose, breathing problems, and also sinusitis. Some people could develop skin diseases and skin rashes as an allergic reaction to toxic mold. The symptoms can range from mild and infrequent, to severe and chronic. Statistics show that a large percentage of Americans suffer from allergy related rhinitis, sinusitis, asthma, skin problems, and other allergic diseases, most of which can be caused by toxic mold.
- **Pathogenic Infections:** Some types of toxic mold are pathogenic in nature and contain illness producing pathogens. Toxic mold types such as aspergillus, fumigatus, histoplasma, etc are known pathogens in toxic mold, which can cause severe infections in people who are vulnerable to such pathogens. Although such toxic mold usually grows in plants and soil, it does find its way into homes due to animals or via open doors and windows, and thus can infect people.
- **Mold Smell Illnesses:** Mold has a very musty and distinctive odor. Some people can recognize the smell of mold more easily than others. The odor of toxic mold is not only unpleasant, but can also cause illnesses such as headaches, vomiting, nausea, blocked noses, and asthmatic symptoms in people exposed to toxic mold odors.
- **Toxic Illnesses:** Toxic mold produces mycotoxins, which are poisonous substances that can affect the entire body of humans. Mycotoxins can be inhaled by people through the air, ingested through food, and can also come in contact with skin, resulting in many illnesses. Different molds produce different mycotoxins, which also depends on what kind of material the toxic mold is growing on. The most common illnesses that are caused due to exposure to mycotoxins are respiratory illnesses. Mycotoxins in toxic mold can affect the lungs and result in a host of respiratory problems. These include difficulty in breathing, stuffy noses, and are even known to cause bleeding in the lungs, which can lead to death.



<http://www.cleanwaterpartners.org/mold/related-illnesses.html>

**You've Got Mold!**  
**Now, what can you do about it?**

<http://www.allergyclean.com/article-youhavemold.htm>



**What works?**

- Stop the source. Most mold problems are created by some type of roofing, waterproofing, plumbing or mechanical problem. Mold needs water to proliferate. Repair the source of the water infiltration.
- Remove and replace rotted wood, carpeting, wallboard or other rotted organic building materials.
- Provide for adequate ventilation.
- Clean the area with a solution of bleach and water. (one part bleach to 10 parts water)
- Keep humidity below 50%. Use a humidity gauge to monitor. Air conditioning will remove humidity. If this is not sufficient, use a dehumidifier.
- Use high quality air conditioning filters (MERV 11). This type of filter will capture most airborne mold spores.
- Use a HEPA air purifier. Stand alone and whole house HEPA systems are very effective at reducing mold counts. Mold spores are light and stay in the air for extended periods of time. Properly sized, efficient air purifiers can reduce mold counts by 90%.

**What doesn't work?**

**Ionizers.** Despite manufacturers claims ionizers are not very effective at reducing mold counts. A MERV 11 air conditioning filter is 2 to 3 times more effective than an ionizer at removing small particles from the air. HEPA air purifiers are 10 to 20 times more effective.

**UV lights.** UV light will destroy mold. However, one must have two things — UV light intensity (which decreases rapidly with distance from the bulb) and dwell time - which is the time that the mold spore is actually exposed to the UV light. The amount of exposure time required to destroy the mold varies greatly for the different types of mold. Some molds are destroyed after a few seconds — others require 8,000 seconds or more. The air traveling in an air duct is moving at a minimum of 100 feet per minute. What are the chances that a mold spore in the duct will be exposed to the UV light for a sufficient length of time? Pretty slim. UV lights have been shown to reduce mold when exposed continuously to the coils of the HVAC system. Cleaning the coils periodically would accomplish the same result.

**Ozone generators.** Ozone is a highly reactive, toxic gas. Extensive tests have shown that low levels of ozone will not significantly reduce mold spores in the air. However, adding ozone to indoor air alters the chemical make-up of the air — often with unexpected and potentially damaging results. Tests have shown that ozone producing machines can actually increase the amount of small particles and potential carcinogens such as formaldehyde. Machines that generate ozone should never be used around people with asthma, COPD or other respiratory diseases.

## Removing Household Mold – A Personal Saga

*Thanks to Bill & Diane Detmer  
for sharing their story with us!*



We have had a problem with mold in our home. Bill was transplanted in June 2005. We returned to our home in Greenville, South Carolina late September 2005. December 2005 we contacted a local company to evaluate our furnace due to a musty odor in our home. We decided to have the HVAC system replaced as it was 20 years old and we didn't want to have to worry about further problems. We purchased two new furnaces, two new air conditioners, an air purification system downstairs, and air cleaner upstairs and a humidifier for the winter. We also had all of the ductwork sealed.

In August we were in my husbands home office late one evening and Bill noticed something on the wall just above the register. He asked me what it was. I looked at it and saw immediately that it was mold. The mold went up the wall about 12 inches and covered the register. I had just been cleaning that room a few days before and vacuum the register cover and there was no mold there at that time. We had noticed that the air in the house was very damp and found that the hardwood floor in the hall just outside our guest bathroom was swollen. Also that the rug in the bathroom was wet. There is a vent that comes up through the floor under the bathroom cabinet. It was soon after that we found the mold. That night I could not sleep. So I went around the house looking at all of the registers and walls above the registers and found mold on all of the registers downstairs and on some of the walls in varying degrees. I took pictures at that time of all of the mold.

The mold was caused by either the new air conditioner being over sized for our home which is surrounded by trees or by a faulty installation.

Bill went to his office the next morning and was told by his transplant coordinator not to come back home until the mold was gone. I contacted the HVAC company that installed the system.

When they finally came, their service manager examined the situation and said the air conditioner was probably over sized but that he wanted to return the next day investigate other possibilities. I informed the service manager that the mold had to be cultured so that we knew exactly what was growing in case Bill got sick and needed treatment. They wanted to come in and remove the register covers and wash them with bleach and wipe the walls down with bleach. They were told they could not disturb the mold or do anything until the mold had been tested. We had to return to Duke for Bill to receive a couple of units of blood because his blood counts were too low. Upon our return, the furnace company had placed a dehumidifier in the downstairs system which altered the mold. I had to return to our friends' house to pick Bill up. When I returned to our home, the furnace company had gone in and covered the registers with blue adhesive covers to do a test on the HVAC system called a blower door test. They had been instructed not to disturb the mold. Obviously, they didn't listen.

While we were in Durham, I called a local cleaning company (ServPro) that was recommended by a friend who is a contractor. They said they could not clean up a mold situation without a mold remediation plan. They gave me the name of a local mold testing company. I made an appointment with a gentleman to come to the house the next day and take mold cultures. He took samples of the mold and air quality samples of the air outside and inside. At the request of the furnace company, he took samples of the air quality under the house. I had informed the furnace company that they would be responsible for paying for the mold testing and for our stay in a hotel until the mold was cleaned up.



## Into the Removal Phase!

Their general manager told me that they would do whatever was necessary to make things right. I had asked the mold tester (industrial hygienist) to also get sample of the mold under the bathroom cabinets, built in cabinets in the den and the ductwork. He stated he would have to come back and get those samples. He never came back.

He did send us a copy of the results of the testing but the furnace company would not allow him to come back and do any further mold testing. The industrial hygienist called and said that because the furnace company had signed the contract for the mold testing, that he was representing them. And since the furnace company was becoming "disagreeable" about the situation, there was a conflict of interest and he could no longer work for us and we would have to hire another industrial hygienist.



We hired another industrial hygienist. It took 5 days for the mold testing results from the first industrial hygienist to come back. It took another two weeks for the results of the samples the 2nd industrial hygienist took because she didn't use a local lab. Once we got the 2nd results, we contact two mold remediation companies to get estimates on the clean up. One company only does the actual clean up. The other company does everything. Once we got the company who does everything to come down one their price to be closer to the other company's price we decided to go with them. The furnace company throughout this process was still trying to tell us that all that was needed to be done was to wipe the mold off the walls with bleach and wash the registers. They became completely uncooperative from that point on. We did some research on the internet about mold removal and also looked at the EPA guidelines on mold removal procedures.

### The mold removal process went like this:

The built a containment inside our front door. This was a free standing structure covered in thick plastic. They put a containment wall upstairs in the hall separating the clean upstairs from the downstairs. They put zipper openings in each containment area. They brought in 5 air scrubbers. These are very large machines that circulate the air several times an hour with HEPA filters and charcoal filters in them. These were placed in a circle from room to room pulling all of the air downstairs through the system. These scrubbers ran throughout the clean up process. All of the registers were removed and placed in a large containment bag. We had to removed all of our china from the china cabinet and put it in other closed areas of the house or pack it up. All of the kitchen cabinets were taped and sealed, along with all of the closets and pantries. We had to remove all of the contents of the built in cabinet in the den and these items were placed in containment bags and put in the garage. All of the pictures were removed from the walls, HEPA vacuumed and placed upstairs in the clean area of the house. All of our stereo equipment was HEPA vacuumed and placed upstairs in the clean area of the house. They moved all of the furniture to the center of each room. Then they taped two layers of plastic on all of the floors. and carpeting making a walking path from the front door containment area to all of the registers. Once that was done they started the demolition.

### Read On: The Demolition!!



## Pillows can harbour harmful fungi

BBC News in video and audio

Friday, 14 October 2005



A small thought to help you sleep when you next get your head down - a study shows the average pillow is home to a host of potentially-harmful fungi. A University of Manchester team found up to 16 types of fungi in pillows they analyzed, the *Allergy journal* reported.

Researchers said feather pillows had fewer species than synthetic versions, particularly in the case of a fungus which exacerbates asthma. Experts advise disinfecting pillows but say fungi occur in most environments.

The researchers took samples from 10 pillows - five feather and five synthetic - which had been used for between 18 months and 20 years. The fungal spores found in the pillows fed off human skins scales and dust mite faeces.

Fungal contamination of bedding was first uncovered by studies carried out in the 1930s, but few studies have been done since then. Researchers found that all 10 pillows had a "substantial fungal load" with between four to 16 different species being identified on each, *Allergy* reported on its website.

The microscopic fungus *Aspergillus fumigatus* was particularly evident in synthetic pillows. This fungus commonly invades the lungs and sinuses and can worsen asthma. It is also known to cause infection in leukaemia and bone marrow transplant patients. The team also found pillows which contained fungi as diverse as bread and vine moulds. Some also had fungi which would usually be found on damp walls.

Lead researcher Professor Ashley Woodcock said the findings showed there was a "miniature ecosystem" operating inside pillows. He added: "Since people spend a third of their life sleeping and breathing close to a potentially large and varied source of fungi, these findings certainly have important implications for patients with respiratory disease - especially asthma and sinusitis."

Dr Geoffrey Scott, chairman of the Fungal Research Trust, which funded the study, said the findings were interesting.

"I think particularly for asthma patients this is relevant. These fungi are found in the environment, so we are exposed to them everywhere. But I think it is still advisable to disinfect pillows and buy feather ones to help reduce the exposure in the home."

A spokesperson for the charity Asthma UK said: "We are aware that patients at the severe end of the spectrum of asthma are more likely to be hypersensitive to fungi than others with asthma. "If you think that fungi could be a trigger for you, you should consult your GP or asthma nurse for advice."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/4339306.stm>

If you are looking to purchase “allergy-friendly” products, you might want to check:

AlerG Your Allergy Relief Superstore  
<http://www.alerg.com/>



<http://www.alerg.com/page/A/CTGY/BED14/source/GAWBED14?gclid=CLTIxoyG9YkCFRlmWAodXwzSJw>

National Allergy



<http://www.natlallergy.com/default.asp>

[http://www.natlallergy.com/category.asp?c=4&sid=GOOGLE&eid=GOOGLE&tid=g\\_pillow\\_encasing&gclid=CMXj9MOG9YkCFQGPWAodQHxwKQ&bhed2=1169504174](http://www.natlallergy.com/category.asp?c=4&sid=GOOGLE&eid=GOOGLE&tid=g_pillow_encasing&gclid=CMXj9MOG9YkCFQGPWAodQHxwKQ&bhed2=1169504174)

Allergy Solutions, Inc.



<http://www.allergysolution.com/default.asp>

<http://www.allergysolution.com/products.asp?dept=52>

Allergy Clean Environments



<http://www.allergyclean.com/index.html>

<http://www.allergyclean.com/mattresspillow.htm>

## MOLD FROM A SUPPORT PERSON'S STANDPOINT

I've given this some thought while the articles on mold have been running in "Transplant News". There are places in the home where dampness occurs daily and where it lasts until it (hopefully) self dries. Or, it may not dry and remain damp for long periods.

Looking this in another way:

“Things that I do now that I never thought about before Terry was transplanted”

- Dry the shower or bat tub after use - this includes the shower curtain.
- Take kitchen garbage out daily.
- Clean (disinfect) kitchen garbage can regularly - even if trash liners are used.
- Clean along sliding doors - these can really get cruddy and mold likes crud.
- Check the basement regularly for dampness.
- Watch the dishwasher especially if it doesn't go through the dry cycle [to save energy].
- The vegetable drawer in the frig – How long have those potatoes been in there?
- Sweep out the general "wet" in the garage when snow/slush falls off the car.
- Don't overwater houseplants. [And keep them out of the bedroom!!]
- Pop the pillows in the dryer about once a week.
- Microwave the kitchen sponge for one minute every day.
- Move the recycling bins to the far side of the garage – further from the kitchen door.
- 

~ Stan Lopata

## Protecting the air we breathe

By Nadia Lerner

Published January 9 2007

Black bag in hand, Robert Weitz makes a house call to the home of a Stamford senior who is experiencing respiratory problems and persistent cough. Although not a physician, Weitz is indisputably a doctor of sorts.

He is the chief operating officer and senior environmental inspector of RTK Environmental Group, with offices in Stamford, Hartford and NYC. The company conducts tests in private residences and commercial buildings to identify mold, lead, asbestos and indoor air-quality problems.

"We haven't been in this house and don't know what it will hold," says Weitz. We accompany him for a mold inspection

This fungal growth appears on organic surfaces in areas of dampness and decay. It throws off spores released through the air that travel to other areas and can become mold infested. It can affect one's health by means of infection, inflammation and allergies.

"Mold is very symptomatic," explains Weitz, a former builder with 15 years in the construction business. Twenty-four to 48 hours after a flood or leak, mold can grow on any cellulose surface, such as wallboard, plywood or wood.

"Wallboard is the biggest problem because it is extremely porous - it is gypsum with paper on both sides of it. As soon as that paper gets wet, in a very short time you will have mold." Symptoms such as cough, stuffy or runny noses, rashes, skin irritations, forgetfulness, irritability, frequent headaches, nausea, dizziness, chronic fatigue and dry or burning nose, eyes or throat might be caused by mold, air-flow patterns or other air-quality issues. Up to half of all illnesses are linked to inferior indoor air quality, according to a 1996 report by the Massachusetts Legislative

Commission on Indoor Air Pollution. It is an escalating problem in this country.

Most at risk are the young and elderly; people with asthma and serious allergies; and cancer, HIV/AIDS patients and others with compromised immune systems.

"If (people) feel better when they're away from home for a couple of days, that should tell them something," says Weitz. "We always encourage clients who have medical issues to keep a journal. When do you feel better? When do you feel worse? When do you notice a change?"

Starting in the basement, Weitz does his detective work. "Some of the tools we use are very simple." He uses a flashlight, mirror - useful for looking at otherwise hidden spots - and a moisture meter to record the extent of moisture in an area, a precursor to mold. Less than 15 percent is normal; more than 15 percent indicates a moisture source. To identify the mold - there are many types, some toxic - Weitz will take samples by pressing a tape onto the surface of a stain. It is then sent to a laboratory and put under a 600 power microscope to be analyzed.

"A lot of people want to know if it's toxic mold or just an allergen," he says. "Many people speak of toxic black mold, a bit of a misnomer because mold can be all different colors. Not only black, but green, yellow and brown, depending on the spore type."

Weitz notices white stains, known as calcification, on a bottom portion of the basement wall. It's caused by water pushing in through the foundation, he explains. A bit farther, he takes note of a couple of water-stained cardboard boxes.

"These are (red) flags we see down here. The staining is fairly recent because these are

light bulb boxes and the bulbs might be changed on a fairly regular basis. All these things come into play in your mind."

Other potential trouble spots emerge, including a file cabinet with deteriorating, rust-coated bottom - perhaps caused by a water leak. "We try to put together as many answers as we can, but you can't every time."

It's much easier when a flood occurs, Weitz explains. People will tell him a toilet overflowed and ran for hours. The water went down through the bathroom floor and into the basement. There's no guessing involved, he says, because the water source is known.

Pointing to a stain that resembles mold, Weitz calls it "suspect mold. Until we take a tape sample of that, it is only that. As good as any of us are - unless it has a very particular pattern that you can say, 'It's definitely mold' - it might just be staining."

A few more mold sources turn up. They include a couple of refrigerators whose doors are covered with black dust-like particles, the darkened inside rim of a washing machine detergent basket and a ceiling beam covered with what Weitz suspects is "historic mold."

That's mold that grew outside the house, perhaps when the beam was sitting outside or in a lumber yard, he explains. Once inside, the mold goes dormant because the moisture source is gone. However, because the mold tries to survive by throwing off spores into the air, it seeks another moisture source.

"It found some," he says. "On the outside of the fridge and in the washing machine basket. It is a living thing."

More possible trouble spots are located. A section of wallboard in the garage has definite mold, with a chimney-flashing leak as the likely source. There's also a first-floor toilet-tank leak and a second-floor baseboard heating pipe leak.

"A big part of the investigation is looking for water that leads to mold," says Weitz. In areas where Weitz suspects mold, he takes air samples with cordless air pumps that draw in mold spores that later will be analyzed in a lab. Back in a few days, the results will confirm suspected problem areas, although sometimes, he says, "They may surprise us."

After his inspection, Weitz goes over his findings verbally with the homeowner, then submits a written report once all test results are back. While RTK Environmental Group does not remediate problems, it can provide a suggested list of remediation companies with expertise in this area.

[A typical mold inspection takes 1 1/2 to two hours and costs \\$400, plus \\$95 for each air test sample taken for analysis.](#)

Test results at this home indicated three mold spore types, including one that was toxic, highest in the basement. Spore numbers were elevated in the remainder of the house, indicating spore migration. A remediation company, plumber and roofer need to take care of repairs and the home should be retested for mold.

RTK Environmental Group, 800-392-6468  
www.rtkenvironmental.com

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<http://www.stamfordadvocate.com/features/scn-sa-air1jan09,0,4512771.story?coll=stam-features-headlines>

## The Detmer's Saga Continues: Demolition:

The crew began cutting out the drywall 18 inches around each of the registers. In some places that were near windows, their cut from the window frame to the corner. They had also taken pictures of every room downstairs before anything was moved. They took pictures of each of the registers before the drywall was cut out. They then HEPA vacuumed the mold off the wall and floor around the registers. They took pictures of the front and back of the cut out piece of drywall and placed it in a containment bag. Then they took pictures of the insulation before removing it from the wall. They placed the insulation in the containment bag. Then they took pictures of the studs in the walls. Then they HEPA vacuumed the studs. Then they sprayed the studs with antimicrobial cleaners and scrubbed the studs. They let that dry and again HEPA vacuumed the area again. Then they repeated the cleaning again after letting everything dry.

Once the area was completely dry, they painted the studs with an anti microbial sealer. They followed this same process at each register site. The bathroom cabinets had to be removed because they had vents under them and there was mold growing on the underside of the cabinets. The plumbing was disconnected and the sinks removed. Once the cabinets were removed they were turned upside down and the mold vacuumed and the wood cleaned and vacuumed as the studs were cleaned. Once all of the mold was removed from the house, they HEPA vacuumed everything and began fogging the ceilings with an anti microbial fog.

The team leader decided that since all the furniture was to be cleaned that it was not necessary to cover it during the fogging. The furniture had been HEPA vacuumed also. The fogging left a sticky residue on EVERYTHING and has had to be cleaned to remove it. The HEPA vacuuming and fogging continued for three days. They vacuumed and fogged the entire downstairs



several times a day.

Finally it was time for the industrial hygienist to retest so that they could get clearance to do the repairs. She did cultures and air quality in the home and outside. These test results were returned the next morning and the repairs began immediately. They had a drywall specialist who replaced all of the drywall. While the drywall repairs were being made, the baseboards and shoe molding that had been removed was cleaned and sealed with the antimicrobial sealer. It was then put back in place and painted.

Once the drywall work was finished, they began painting. We had a great deal of trouble matching the colors using the original paint colors and it had to be custom matched. Once all of the painting was finished they started removing all of the plastic paths and cleaning the floors and putting back the furniture. The issue of the sticky furniture came up and they tried to clean it. This process has not gone well. I finally bought some furniture cleaner myself and am cleaning the wood furniture with Ajax liquid detergent, rinsing then cleaning again with Guardsman wood cleaner. Where needed I am waxing the furniture with beeswax furniture polish. It is taking hours to do. The mold cleaning company had our upholstered furniture cleaned by the specialist and we are going to have the call in a leather cleaning specialist to clean our den furniture. After using the leather cleaning kit that came with

the furniture twice and conditioning it, the furniture is still sticky. In spite of the house not being finished, we have moved back home. I am continuing to clean the wood furniture and mop the floors myself so that we can be home for Thanksgiving. It will take weeks to put everything back. Some of the special painting such as stripes in our dining room, we are going to do ourselves and there is some wallpaper in the kitchen we are going to repair ourselves to avoid having to have all of the wallpaper in the kitchen replaced. We have only lived in this house 4 hours and remodeled it when we moved in. All of the paint and wallpaper is new.

The cost of the mold remediation and repairs is about \$22,000. The mold testing was about \$5000.00 between the two industrial hygienists. We lived in an extended stay hotel for over three months. After joining their frequent stay program we received over \$600.00 in discounts and because we were there over 90 days we got back all of our sales taxes. The hotel is going to mail us a detailed record of our stay to give to the furnace company for our total expenses. Our estimated hotel cost was \$8000.00.

The hotel billed our charge card each week. We have been making the minimum payment each month. We got a home equity line when we moved into this house for the remodeling until we sold our old home. We have used that line to pay the mold remediation company who required half of the payment upfront before they started the clean up. We have not yet paid the industrial hygienist. We just received a final bill from them after the post clean up testing. The furnace company paid for the first industrial hygienist.

There was mold in the ductwork. The furnace company finally agreed to replace all of the ductwork under the house. We are going to be sending the furnace company copies of all of our expenses and requesting them to pay for everything. We have reported the furnace company to Lennox, the better business bureau and the building permit office. The furnace company was

double fined for not securing a permit to do the complete change out of the HVAC. The county inspector came yesterday.

We consulted a construction attorney. We paid \$250.00 for his time. He told us that even though we have a legitimate case and that Bill is the one in 500 people whose life would be negatively affected by exposure to mold that because our actual damages would be less than \$50,000.00; it would cost that much to litigate the case. We would win. BUT....we would get the \$30,000.00 in damages and would have to turn around and pay all of that money and more in attorney fees and court costs. We would still have mold in our house and we would still be living in a hotel waiting for all of this to be settled. We would then have to have all of the work done anyway. We were advised NOT to turn this in to our insurance company. Our house would be marked as a "mold house" and the insurance company would likely not renew our homeowners insurance. Houses that have mold do not sell without being repaired. Houses that have had a mold problem are difficult to sell.

If we are forced to sue the furnace company we will likely win BUT....we would have to hire a personal injury attorney and sue them not only for the actual damages but for the emotional and personal injury this situation has caused our family. This would provide enough money to pay all of the associated legal expenses and give us the money to pay for the repairs. Because the furnace company has likely been through this before, they know "the drill". So their attorney would get together with our attorney and the process will go like this:

We will be called in to give depositions on a regular basis for the next year or so. Because our attorney has to know everything that is asked and what we say, he/she would have to be present. These depositions go on for hours at a time. The attorney would charge \$250.00 per hour he/she has to sit there and listen to each deposition. Each attorney would also consult with "experts" in

the field of mold. All of Bill's medical records would have to be made available to both attorneys. It will take months to review and take notes from all of his records. We would be charged for the time it takes to read all of his records. If after going through all of that and incurring all of those expenses we don't go away and the case actually heads to court, the furnace company would likely try to settle out of court. By that time the furnace companies attorney will have tried to exhaust any and all financial resources we have or could ever hope to have in hopes of making us give up and go away. If it does go to court we will be mercilessly grilled and made to look like all we are after money and that somehow we caused the mold problem.

[The question remains....Is this what Bill went through a lung transplant for?](#) To spend was precious time he may have fighting a furnace company and spending his days giving depositions and going to court and becoming more financially ruined that we may end up being from his lung transplant.

The constructions attorney gave us this advice: Avoid suing the guy if we can. Be glad if we come out of this with .50 on the dollar. Go ahead and moved forward in getting the mold repairs done and move back home as soon as possible. Don't give the furnace company any reason to say we have just sat in a hotel and tried to cause them more expenses than was necessary. Make the furnace company regret the day they ever did business with us by becoming a thorn in their side. Report them to every possible resource available that will contact them and make them look bad. If they continue to refuse to pay us back for our expenses, contact the local news who does reports on companies who hurt people. Contact the local newspaper and any other resource available. Make the furnace company so miserable that they are willing to write us a check for our expenses just to make us go away. If that doesn't work, then take them to court.

Being Christian people, this is not something that comes easy for us to do. We are thankful that we have been able to finance the mold remediation and hotel bill. Now we are home and taking the next step in getting our money back. Tomorrow we will be sending the furnace company another letter along with copies of all of our bills.

The furnace company has gone from telling us "There are no deep pockets here"; "You must like living in a hotel"; "Your house is cheaply built and that's why the mold grew"; "that mold was already there"; "we just put back the same size equipment that was already there". Now we have gotten them to replace all of the ductwork under the house. The last conversation Bill had with the furnace company owner end with the owner saying, "send me a number".

They still have to fix the original problem by either replacing the oversized air conditioner or fixing the bad installation (which they may have already done prior to the inspection when they replaced the ductwork). The inspector said the ductwork is the best work he has ever seen this company do. We have a great deal of work ahead of us and we are putting steps in place to take in case the furnace company does not re pay us for our expenses. They know if we sue them, they will loose and likely shut down their company. We are doing our research and very carefully taking one step at a time. We are working hard not to make a move that will be a mistake. If we have to take further steps I'll let you know what those are as they happen.

We hope in some small way this helps someone not have to go through what we have gone through. Let us know if you have any questions.

Kindest Regards,  
Diane Detmer

## 10 Tips for a Mold-Free House

By Tom Kraeutler, AOL Home Improvement Editor

Here's what you need to know to keep your home mold-free:

**MIND THE MOISTURE:** Keep humidity below 50% in basements. Improve outside grading and drainage by keeping gutters clean and soil always sloping away from your home. Cover dirt crawlspace floors with plastic to reduce moisture.

**STORE SAFELY:** Keep all storage at least several inches up off concrete floors and away from foundations where dampness can easily seep in. This is especially important with organic material like cardboard boxes. Avoid using wooden shelves; metal or plastic shelves are preferable.

**HEAT FINISHED BASEMENTS:** Below grade spaces like finished basements are more likely to become infested and should always be heated to at least 60 degrees, even when not being used. The warmer the space, the less the chance that condensation will form and feed a mold problem.

**BUILD MOLD RESISTANT:** When choosing building materials, use materials that don't feed the mold. Tom Combs took this option when remodeling the bathroom in his family's 1990 lake house outside of Atlanta, Georgia. "The ceiling was covered with mold and I wanted to take immediate action before the situation worsened." Combs' solution was Dens Armor Plus, a wallboard made by Georgia Pacific that is specifically designed to prevent mold growth. Unlike regular drywall that has a paper face, Dens Armor Plus has a fiberglass face that cannot feed a mold problem.

**VENTILATE VIGOROUSLY:** Poor or missing ventilation fans in damp spaces like baths and kitchens can leave enough moisture behind to sustain a mold problem. Make sure all baths and kitchens are vented by properly sized fans that take moisture outside and NOT into attics. Keep the bathroom door open after bathing to speed drying of surfaces.

**AVOID BASEMENT CARPETS:** More than almost any other material in a house, carpets can be incredibly effective havens for mold. Even non-organic carpets can collect dirt, dust and moisture that combine to provide mold a fertile ground in which to grow, especially in below-grade spaces where relative humidity tends to be higher. Hard surface products like laminate flooring or engineered hardwoods are always a better choice for basement spaces.

**FILTER THE AIR:** If your home has a forced-air heating and cooling system, using a top quality air filter is a must. May recommends pleated filters with a MERV rating of at least 6-8, or 11 if the family is prone to allergies. Another option is a whole house electronic air cleaner. Mounted permanently to the home's HVAC system, a whole house air cleaner uses ionization technology to charge particles making them stick to filters like a magnet. According to Consumer Reports, the most effective unit is the Aprilaire Model 5000, which can trap virus-sized particles as small as one micron (one millionth of a meter) and needs just yearly filter replacement.

**INSULATE DUCTS:** Duct systems that carry heated or cooled air throughout your house must be insulated whenever they pass through unheated or uncooled spaces like attics or basements. If not, condensation can form inside the ducts and, when combined with dust in the air, can allow mold to grow in the ducts, and then spores can easily circulate throughout your entire house.

**CLEAN CAREFULLY:** Use mold-inhibiting cleaners in bathrooms and kitchens. Portable air conditioning units should be taken apart and cleaned at the start of every season. When painting damp spaces like kitchens and bathrooms, use paint with a mold inhibitor EPA-approved for indoor use.

**FIX FLOODS FAST:** If you do have a major leak or flood, quick action can stop mold before it starts. Thoroughly dry soaked carpets and padding, and remove any wet upholstery. Then wash and disinfect all surfaces before the carpet and pad are replaced.

## Mold Remediation Requires Specialist Long-Term Solution May Be Elusive

By David Bradley, Associated Press  
Saturday, October 15, 2005

Chances are you've never heard of "mold remediation." Most homeowners haven't.

Should you be among unfortunate homeowners all too familiar with the label, you never want to hear the expensive, time-consuming, complicated term again.

You may eventually come face to face with airborne molds if you live along hurricane pathways or experience even minor water invasion from leaky pipes, windows or gutters. The term is indeed worth knowing.

Mold remediators are experts who work on-site to rid homes of this omnipresent problem once household mold has been identified.

Often clad in spore-tight clothing and respirators and armed with high-tech gear as well as assorted equipment from drying agents to pry bars and saws, this new contractor industry sprang up quickly once the health risks of mold became clear.

But the niche business carries "buyer beware" caveats. States such as Texas have moved to oversee the mold remediation business to assure taxpayers that firms they chose to remove harmful molds meet minimal requirements to get the job done.

The Texas Department of State Health Services has licensed mold remediation firms since May 2004. The department Web site lists 152 licensed contractors to serve the entire state. With Hurricane Rita causing tens of millions in dollars of water damage, the market for mold assistance is huge.

In addition to certifying a company's mold



removal skills, Texas requires that the homeowner be given a certificate of "mold damage remediation" by the contractor. It verifies the work has been completed in accordance with state guidelines.

Of course, the removal of mold is no guarantee it won't return. If the homeowner doesn't remedy a leak or water source or keep humidity levels to mold-unfriendly levels, chances are good mold will return again. It is virtually impossible to completely remove molds because the spores are airborne and thus always present.

Not all states have such licensing programs in place. Mold is a frequent topic for state health departments, but in many cases homeowners are directed to "licensed contractors," but a roster of such contractors is not shown.

Consumers should check state health department Web sites or call local health departments with questions about mold remediation or recommended firms.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides information on mold remediation and general mold information but does not list mold remediation by state.

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/14/AR2005101400856.html?nav=rss\\_realestate/own](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/14/AR2005101400856.html?nav=rss_realestate/own)

## Interesting – and possibly helpful links:

We do NOT endorse or recommend any specific site. You've read enough here to know that dealing with mold can be hazardous – and potentially very dangerous to your health. We urge that you exercise extreme caution – and approach all information sites with skepticism. Check and double check all information presented, and check with your doctor before making any moves to deal with mold – or any fungus. Check credentials, and consult a lawyer if you think it might be necessary.

### ADVANCE MOLD REMEDIATION

#### Mold Glossary

<http://www.advancemoldenv.com/glossary.asp>

Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Environmental Hazards & Health Effects - Mold

<http://www.cdc.gov/mold/cleanup.htm>

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Guidelines on Assessment and Remediation of Fungi in Indoor Environments

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/epi/moldrpt1.shtml>

### HomeBlue - Contractor Network

Get Matched To Pre-Screened Specialists

Mold Removal, Lead, Radon, Asbestos

<http://www.homeblue.com/environmental-1.htm>

Lots of people helped in the preparation of this report on mold. Thanks to you all! Again, we emphasize that we are not experts here. If you have questions, please discuss them with your doctor, or other expert.

This is an unofficial publication from non-professional volunteers who acquire and disseminate information as it may apply to pre- and post-lung transplant candidates and recipients. The only stated purpose of this is the sharing of information from sources believed to be reliable. We are not affiliated with any private or public.

MOLD REPORT  
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