

# Mold Exposure Symptoms

In 2004 the Institute of Medicine (IOM) found there was sufficient evidence to link indoor exposure to mold with upper respiratory tract symptoms, cough, and wheeze in otherwise healthy people; with asthma symptoms in people with asthma; and with hypersensitivity pneumonitis in individuals susceptible to that immune-mediated condition. <http://www.iom.edu/>



“Exposure to damp and moldy environments may cause a variety of health effects, or none at all. Some people are sensitive to molds. For these people, molds can cause

nasal stuffiness, throat irritation, coughing or wheezing, eye irritation, or, in some cases, skin irritation. People with mold allergies may have more severe reactions. Immune-compromised people and people with chronic lung illnesses, such as obstructive lung disease, may get serious infections in their lungs when they are exposed to mold. These people should stay away from areas that are likely to have mold.” Reference:

**National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)** plans, directs, and coordinates a national program to maintain and improve the health of the American people by promoting a healthy environment. has a toll-free telephone number for information and FAXs, including a list of publications: NCEH Health Line 1-888-232-6789. <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/az/m.html>

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) found there was sufficient evidence to link indoor exposure to mold with upper respiratory tract symptoms, cough, and wheeze in otherwise healthy people. The common health concerns from molds include hay fever-like allergic symptoms. Certain individuals with chronic respiratory disease (chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, asthma) may experience difficulty breathing. Individuals with immune suppression may be at increased risk for infection from molds.



- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1600 Clifton Rd., Atlanta, GA 30333
- 800-CDC-INFO, (800-232-4636) • (2004 <http://www.cdc.gov/MOLD/stachy.htm#Q1> )

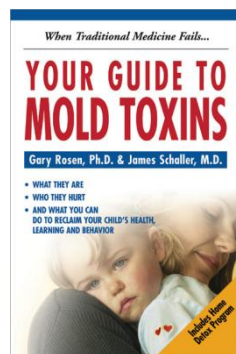


Potential health effects and symptoms associated with mold exposures include allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory complaints. Molds can trigger asthma episodes in sensitive individuals with asthma. People with asthma should avoid contact with or exposure to molds.

EPA's publication, *Indoor Air Pollution: An Introduction for Health Professionals*, assists health professionals (especially the primary care physician) in diagnosis of patient symptoms that could be related to an indoor air pollution problem. <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html>

“Unlike typical viral or bacterial infections, mold toxins can be active throughout virtually the entire body and can cause a diverse array of child health problems. That is why they can be hard to diagnose. While mold-related health problems affect people of all ages, research shows that children are particularly vulnerable. Common Symptoms include: Poor attention span, irritability, mood swings, homework difficulty, anxiety, excess aggression, limited ability to focus, headaches, disobedience, difficulty learning, agitation, and difficulty relating to peers.”

**James Schaller, MD**, *Your Guide to Mold Toxins*, 2006, pg vi.



**National Academy of Science** “Neurotoxic mycotoxins (from mold) tend to fall into three general classes...many of the toxins are very potent and have immediate effects on animals exposed to a single dose. (Damp Indoor Spaces, Section Neurotoxic Effects of Mold, pg.157,pg160).

The **World Health Organization** issued *Guidelines for Indoor Air Quality: Dampness and Mold*, a 248 page report. This document provides a comprehensive review of the scientific evidence on health problems associated with building moisture and biological agents. The review concludes that the most important effects are increased prevalence of respiratory symptoms, allergies and asthma as well as perturbation of the immunological system. The most important means for avoiding adverse health effects is the prevention (or minimization) of persistent dampness and microbial growth on interior surfaces and in building structures. (2009 [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/43325/E92645.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/43325/E92645.pdf))



Most allergic responses to mold involve hay fever-type symptoms that can make you miserable, but aren't serious. However, certain allergic conditions caused by mold are more severe. These include:

- Mold induced asthma. In people allergic to mold, breathing in spores can trigger an asthma flare-up. If you have a mold allergy and asthma, be sure you have an emergency plan in place in case of a severe asthma attack.

- Allergic fungal sinusitis. This occurs when fungus lodges and grows in the sinuses. Surgery may be necessary to remove a tightly packed infection ("fungal ball").

- Allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis. This fungal infection of the lungs can occur in people with asthma or cystic fibrosis.

- Hypersensitivity pneumonitis. This rare condition occurs when exposure to airborne particles such as mold spores cause the lungs to become inflamed. It's often triggered by exposure to allergy-causing dust at work.

**Other problems caused by mold:** Recent news coverage has focused on the possibility that certain molds (such as so-called "black mold") may cause a host of symptoms such as fatigue, headache, nausea, fever, rashes and coughing — and even a condition that causes bleeding lungs in infants).

By Mayo Clinic staff, Original Article:<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mold-allergy/DS00773>

**Toxic Mold Lawyers.org** reports: The first symptoms of black mold that are most common are headaches. Headaches appear to happen quite often when around black mold and inhaling it in the system. When working or sitting around black mold you will begin to feel your head throb, this is your bodies way of telling you that it is trying to fight off the spores that are entering into your system.

Another symptom of black mold poisoning is watery eyes and itchy throat. Common symptoms of black mold are usually happening in pairs. When you feel your eyes water you will notice your throat becoming itchy and this is a very common symptom for black mold poisoning.

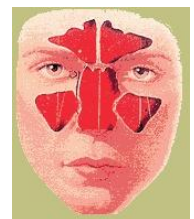


A third common symptom of black mold exposure is excessive coughing and mucus. This coughing is a common mold symptom when the black mold attaches itself to the throat and lungs causing irritation and the body to create more mucus to break it down in the system. A more severe common symptom of black mold poisoning is the lungs will begin to bleed. This will happen after you have been exposed to black mold for quite some time and if your system cannot fight it off anymore. The black mold will attach itself to your lungs and begin causing them to be inflamed and become irritated. Over time the mold will cause bleeding and severe damage if not cared for properly by a doctor.

<http://www.toxicmoldlawyers.org/category/black-toxic-mold/>

**A Brief Guide to Mold in the Workplace-** Indoors, mold growth should be avoided. Problems may arise when mold starts eating away at materials, affecting the look, smell, and possibly, with the respect to wood-framed buildings, affecting the structural integrity of the buildings.

Molds can grow on virtually any substance, as long as moisture or water, oxygen, and an organic source are present. Molds reproduce by creating tiny spores (viable seeds) that usually cannot be seen without magnification. Mold spores continually float through the indoor and outdoor air. Molds gradually damage building materials and furnishings. If left unchecked, mold can eventually cause structural damage to a wood framed building, weakening floors and walls as it feeds on moist wooden structural members. If you suspect that mold has damaged building integrity, consult a structural engineer or other professional with the appropriate expertise. Molds can cause adverse effects by producing allergens (substances that can cause allergic reactions). Potential health concerns are important reasons to prevent mold growth and to remediate existing problem areas.



**U.S. Dept. of Labor, Occupational, Safety and Health Administration,** Safety and Health Bulletin 03-10-10.

Molds can also cause asthma attacks in some individuals who are allergic to mold. In addition, exposure to mold can irritate the eyes, skin, nose and throat in certain individuals. Symptoms other than allergic and irritant types are not commonly reported as a result of inhaling mold in the indoor environment.

Some specific species of mold produce mycotoxins under certain environmental conditions. Potential health effects from mycotoxins are the subject of ongoing scientific research and are beyond the scope of this document. <http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib101003.html>



**Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America** -Mold spores can deposit on the lining of the nose and cause hay fever symptoms. They also can reach the lungs, to cause asthma or another serious illness called allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis. Sometimes the reaction is immediate, and sometimes the reaction is delayed. Symptoms often worsen in a damp or moldy room such as a basement; this may suggest mold allergy.

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, 8201 Corporate Drive, Suite 1000, Landover, MD 20785,  
<http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=18&cont=234>

**National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases** reports in their *Airborne Allergens Research*-When inhaled, tiny fungal spores, or sometimes pieces of fungi, may cause allergic rhinitis. Because they are so small, mold spores also can reach the lungs. Like pollens, mold spores are important airborne allergens only if they are abundant, easily carried by air currents, and allergenic in their chemical makeup. Found almost everywhere, mold spores in some areas are so numerous they often outnumber the pollens in the air.

Fungi related to them may cause other health problems similar to allergic diseases. Some kinds of *Aspergillus mold* may cause several different illnesses, including both infections and allergies. These fungi may lodge in the airways or a distant part of the lung and grow until they form a compact sphere known as a “fungus ball.” In people with lung damage or serious underlying illnesses, *Aspergillus mold* may grasp the opportunity to invade the lungs or the whole body.



In some people, exposure to these fungi also can lead to asthma or to a lung disease resembling severe inflammatory asthma called allergic bronchopulmonary aspergillosis. This latter condition, which occurs only in a small number of people with asthma, causes wheezing, low-grade fever, and coughing up of brown-flecked masses or mucus plugs.



[http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/allergicDiseases/Documents/airborne\\_allergens.pdf](http://www.niaid.nih.gov/topics/allergicDiseases/Documents/airborne_allergens.pdf)

NIH Publication No. 03-7045 April 2003 [www.niaid.nih.gov](http://www.niaid.nih.gov)