

## A Healthy Home



**Mold illness is not an allergy.** It is inflammation within the body which is caused by an immune system that has gone haywire. The term "mold illness" is a subcategory of biotoxin illness, called Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS). The proper definition of CIRS is: an acute and chronic, systemic inflammatory response syndrome acquired following exposure to the interior environment of a water-damaged building with resident toxigenic organisms, including, but not limited to fungi, bacteria, actinomycetes and mycobacteria as well as inflammagens such as endotoxins, beta glucans, hemolysins, proteinases, mannans, c-type lectins and possibly spirocyclic drimanes, plus volatile organic compounds.

### Symptoms:

If you are experiencing several of these symptoms, you could be suffering from mold illness.

◆Fatigue ◆Weakness ◆Aches ◆Muscle Cramps ◆Unusual Pain ◆Ice Pick Pain  
◆Headache ◆Light Sensitivity ◆Red Eyes ◆Blurred Vision ◆Tearing ◆Sinus Problems  
◆Cough ◆Shortness of Breath ◆Abdominal Pain ◆Diarrhea ◆Joint Pain ◆Morning Stiffness  
◆Memory Issues ◆Focus/Concentration Issues ◆Word Recollection Issues  
◆Decreased Learning of New Knowledge ◆Confusion ◆Disorientation ◆Skin Sensitivity  
◆Mood Swings ◆Appetite Swings ◆Sweats (especially night sweats) ◆Temperature Regulation or Dysregulation Problems  
◆Excessive Thirst ◆Increased Urination ◆Static Shocks ◆Numbness ◆Tingling ◆Vertigo ◆Metallic Taste ◆Tremors

This illness affects multiple systems in the body, which causes the patient to exhibit multiple symptoms.

### How Did I Get Sick?

This illness happens after exposure to the interior environment of a Water-Damaged Building (WDB). There are many ways buildings become home to a toxic mix of microbes, fragments of microbes, and harmful chemicals. Buildings can host fungi,

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bacteria, mycobacteria, and actinomycetes as a result of construction defects like inappropriate ventilation; faulty construction of crawl spaces or inadequate building design; flat roofs or fake stucco cladding without adequate caulking; incomplete basements exposed to saturated ground water conditions; or not correcting water leaks. Since 1998, Dr. Shoemaker has treated over 6,000 patients with an illness caused by exposure to these conditions. Each patient has a syndrome that is readily identified by blood tests performed in standard medical labs all over the country. These illnesses reflect a growing societal problem: dangerous buildings. Inhaling these dangerous inflammagens is what makes people sick.

We live in the Era of Dangerous Buildings, so the likelihood that you won't ever be exposed to dangerous buildings is quite low.

### **What Happens in the Body?**

Many patients don't "look that bad." But that person is struggling with an illness that causes them to lose their quality of life. These patients didn't know that their genes made them prime targets for an assault by their own innate immune systems. Because of exposure to the interior environment of a Water-Damaged Building (WDB), these patients have an innate immune response that is going haywire.

At the core of why one person becomes ill from this exposure and another doesn't is because of their genetic susceptibility (or predisposition) - what is built into their DNA. Every person's innate immune system is personal and genetically coded - thus, it works differently for each of us. When the body is faced with a foreign substance, it immediately begins to process that substance - to determine if it is good or bad, a friend or a foe. If the body determines the substance is a foe, it will develop antibodies to bind these substances, called antigens. Normally then, the next time a non-mold susceptible person walks into a WDB, his antibodies will target the antigen and clear it out fast. However, there is an occurrence of specific genes in about 25% of the population that cause this process of building antibodies to the substances in the WDB to fail. Think of a computer operating system full of errors. In these people, the antigens stay in the body, and our own defenses bombard our body and cause inflammation in the body to go wild. What you now have is a shell of a person who is defenseless against new exposures and is suffering daily from inflammation. The innate immune system doesn't recognize these toxic organisms and goes nuts in the body.

It is a vicious cycle - the foreign antigens (substances) stay in the body, causing the immune system to constantly fight back. This causes so much inflammation in the body that it leads to chronic illness, and the occurrence of the many symptoms listed above. Our entire being suffers from friendly fire from our own innate immune system.

### **What Mold Does to Your Body - Understanding Mold Illness**

Things didn't used to be so difficult to accomplish. It didn't used to be impossible to make it through a day at work. Now you find it almost impossible to get through a load of laundry. You are so tired all of the time. You are just hoping your disability is approved so you can live.

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Maybe you were a star athlete at school and at the top of your class. Now you just try to make it through your classes and survive the massive headache that hits by second period. That's if you can handle the nausea and vomiting that starts, or the diarrhea that is inevitable. Just trying to stay awake and focus on your studies at school becomes the goal of your entire day -not to mention remember what you are learning. Gone are the days of zipping through your classes and getting to ball practice after school. You can't even breathe well enough at school to make it through the day. Dreams of being a part of that state championship athletic team have been destroyed.

This is what happens to people who are injured by Dangerous Buildings - those that are filled with biotoxins that your body cannot process because of your genes. This is a real illness and wreaks havoc on your body. Your body's response to the poisons causes such inflammation throughout the major systems of your body that life as you knew it has changed forever. Of course while all of this is happening in your body, you probably still look ok. You get told all of the time that you don't look sick. But you sure do feel sick.

Maybe you have been to countless doctors and had countless tests, only to be told everything is normal or that you have allergies. Or even worse, that you look fine, so your complaints must be in your head. You are told you are just depressed and that you have a psychological problem.

What Can you do?

- 1) Educate yourselves.
- 2) Educate your clients.
- 3) Test every home -- new homes can be hazardous as well.

Personally, here's what I can do to help.

- 1) I'm setting up a foundation to help people in this situation to afford the large cost of repairs and to help where we can with medical costs and getting them in front of the right physicians.
- 2) I'm willing to counsel and direct people who need help.
- 3) Basically, I'll perform for them at whatever level they need and I'm able.

What will Pinnacle Mortgage do?

Pinnacle Mortgage will support and help pay for the cost of testing homes where the mortgage loans close through us.

Please feel free to contact me. I'm happy to answer individual questions.

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**Scott Lagge**