



# Got Mold? NOW WHAT?

Hope for Health and Home  
An Overview of Biotoxin Illness  
Margaret Christensen MD  
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# Got Mold? Now What? Hope for Health and Home!

## Overview of Toxic Mold and Biotoxin Illness

Margaret Christensen, MD and Carpathia Collaborative

Unfortunately, exposure to toxic molds from water damaged buildings [WDBs] is very common and completely underdiagnosed. At least **50% of homes and 60% of commercial buildings** have had some kind of water issue—churches, schools, dorms as well as office buildings, and don't forget your car!

With at least **20% of the population being susceptible to mycotoxin illness**, no wonder there's an epidemic of chronic mystery illnesses occurring!

These toxic molds aren't the same kinds found in outdoor environments; these feed on paper, wood and organic materials. They like humid, moist air and dark, warm places (behind water heaters, under refrigerators and sinks). Because of "tight" building construction, the overuse of fungicides and electro-smog EMFs from wireless devices, we're seeing more toxic mold species producing mycotoxins. Even high humidity (>50%) environments can create mold growth in 48-72 hours.

### Symptoms and Illnesses Caused by Toxic Mold Exposure:

Mold/Biotoxin illness may present in many ways, often with some kind of pain or inflammation, in almost any area of the body:

- Chronic recurrent upper respiratory and sinus infections
- Chronic headaches/migraines
- Severe chronic fatigue or ongoing flu-like symptoms
- Fibromyalgia (tender, sore muscles)
- Neurological issues (tremors, neuropathy, brain fog, ADD, learning issues, etc.)
- Neuro-degenerative diseases (Parkinson's, MS, ALS, Alzheimer's and other dementias)
- Severe gut symptoms (IBS, Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, SIBO/SIFO)
- Autoimmune disorders (thyroid, Hashimoto's, psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis, eczema, hives)
- Multiple chemical sensitivities and histamine intolerance (rashes and hives)
- Night sweats (common in men of all ages, as well as women)
- Psychiatric symptoms (anxiety, depression, panic attacks, bipolar symptoms, psychosis)
- Severe sleep disturbances
- Recurrent interstitial cystitis, bladder infections and frequent urination
- Hormonal imbalances (adrenal and thyroid hormones)
- Infertility, heavy periods and cramps, endometriosis, PMS, PCOS
- Cardiovascular disease
- Lyme and co-infections, including viral infections like EBV, HHV6,
- Cancer (especially hormonal, leukemias/lymphomas and bladder/kidney)
- Children (chronic ear, throat and upper respiratory infections, asthma, allergies, ADD/ADHD, sleep, irritability, bedwetting)

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## Dr. Margaret Christensen and Carpathia Collaborative Overview of Toxic Mold and Biotoxin Illness

### Who Gets Sick?

How badly you and your family members are affected depends on your genetics, total toxic load, timing and length of exposures. Often times, several family members are affected in different ways, with some having no symptoms. Women and children can be more susceptible. In groups of people—like at work, school, or church—there may be a number of folks sick with different complaints.

Biotoxin illness can be very overwhelming, yet it can be conquered!

### Mold, Biotoxins and Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome [SIRS]

Symptoms could be caused from these 4 major reasons:

1. **Allergic response** to the mold itself triggers the immune system to create inflammation cascades and imbalances.
2. **Toxic response** from mycotoxins produced by molds can damage cell membranes and mitochondria thus interfering with cell function and poisoning energy production.
3. **Additional toxins** from other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that toxic molds and bacterial biofilms produce disrupt detoxification mechanisms in cells, liver, kidneys and gut
4. **Immune system** suppression has a direct toxic effect on many forms of white blood cells, thus leading to chronic recurrent bacterial infections and biofilm formation.

### Total Toxic Load

Mold is only one of the many biotoxins found in water-damaged buildings. The illness caused by exposure to these toxins is much more complex than most clinicians and patients assume. Because mycotoxins and biotoxins can suppress the immune system, you often end up on multiple rounds of antibiotics, which diminishes the immune protective effect of healthy gut flora. This can cause overgrowth of Candida, another type of fungus that produces its own mycotoxins.

Mycotoxins are tiny and fat soluble, so they get into cell membranes and the mitochondria, disrupting your ability to produce energy and often causing chronic fatigue, as well as the disruption of hormonal and immune functions of cells. This fatigue can be worse after intense exertion. And, many foods have mycotoxins in them (so a low mold diet can be helpful).

Mycotoxins can stay present in fat cells and cell membranes for many years after exposure, even after you address the moldy situation itself. In other words, a previous exposure, such as growing up in a home with a moldy basement or a dorm in college, may precede your sickness later in life.

Exposure to other toxins through air, water, personal care and cleaning products along with the "standard" American diet full of processed food chemicals, pesticides, GMOs, as well as lacking nutrients, may present you with a total toxic load that overwhelms your capacity to detoxify.

Wi-Fi and EMFs [electromagnetic fields] maybe hindering detoxification.

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Stress and trauma—some of the most common and detrimental toxins out there—from your past or present, including stressors passed generationally, can impact your genetic expression (i.e., epigenetics) and ability to detoxify. Just being chronically sick without being able to find a solution can cause PTSD and chronic limbic system activation of the fight or flight response, making recovery even more difficult.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Take the ACE and Resiliency test at [ACESTooHigh.com](https://www.acesstoohigh.com). Tools and support for the psycho-spiritual aspect of recovery are absolutely fundamental!

## Co-infections and Other Toxins

Due to immune system suppression by mycotoxins, underlying bacterial and viral infections such as mono virus (EBV), CMV, Parvovirus and others, may be reactivated, as well as activation or reactivation of tick-borne illnesses, including Lyme and its co-infections [Babesia, Erlichia, Bartonella]

In addition, heavy metal toxicity, such as mercury and lead, may also need to be evaluated.

Excess vaccines may be a culprit, as well as toxic VOCs from mold and bacterial colonies.

*Chronic recurrent sinus infections are fungal and need to be treated as such. First, avoid further usage of antibiotics and steroids! Nasal irrigation is a must. See the important sinus protocols at the end of this guide.*

## Hormonal Imbalances

There is usually marked disruption of hormonal systems, from thyroid to estrogen, testosterone and progesterone and cortisol/adrenal function, that will need to be tested and rebalanced to optimize health.

## The Recovery Marathon: Pace Yourself!

Recovery from mold toxicity is a marathon, NOT a sprint. Keep your expectations realistic! Recovery may take a year or more.

If you have toxic mold, SIRS or biotoxin illnesses, you might feel brain fog: trouble with words, remembering, making decisions and too exhausted to do much of anything. You might be irritable, angry and easily frustrated, anxious and/or depressed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Bring someone with you to doctor visits who can take notes and help implement the plan of care.

## Expense: Financially, Emotionally, Physically

Unfortunately, recovering from toxic mold is often an expensive journey: many years of fruitless doctor visits, poor health and productivity, deal with the mold source, testing to identify the illness,

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long process of removing the toxins from your body.

*Fortunately, you can start with the following simple and inexpensive steps. Take these steps with patience, perseverance and self-compassion.*

## First Off: Resiliency, Neuroplasticity and Psycho-Spiritual Support

It's critical to take a mind-body-spirit approach and do these little things, one day at a time:

- Daily mindfulness meditation and/or prayer practice
- Find something that makes you laugh and brings you joy
- Do something creative
- Make gentle daily movements to get lymph flowing and to release adrenaline
- Belong: there are a number of online support groups, blogs and chat groups
- Get together with others at your local integrative/functional clinic, or church or school, and learn from each other
- Spend time outdoors in nature for fresh air, sunlight and literally “grounding”.

## RESOURCES TO RESEARCH:

- Heartmath, Neural Feedback, EFT-Tapping, EMDR, Limbic system
- 12-step programs, mold support groups
- HIGHLY Recommended DNRS Limbic system Retraining [[RetrainingTheBrain.com](https://www.retrainingthebrain.com)],

## TREATMENT: THE BIG PICTURE OVERVIEW

Our solution is based on the work of Drs. Ritchie Shoemaker, Patricia Kane, William Rea, Joseph Brewer, Neil Nathan, Don Dennis and Dietrich Klinghardt. This is an evolving field and no single expert has all the answers. We must look at a broad spectrum of approaches to find solutions.

## Basic Treatment Steps:

1. **Remove yourself** from the toxic source ASAP, and/or optimize air quality. Camp in your backyard. Live in an RV. Move to a clean apartment or hotel that you've checked out and treated with BioBalance. Take nothing with you. Pack all items in plastic, not cardboard boxes if you're not ready to get rid of them, but don't have time to deal with them now.
2. **If you cannot leave**, there are steps to diminish your exposure: 1). Get high-quality HEPA [air filtration units](#) (Austin, Vollara, IAQ Air, Molekule), 2). Fog with [BioBalance](#) dry fogger (use coupon code MoldSummit for a discount), 3). Turn off Wi-Fi router at night, 4). Visit [Microbalance.com](#) for E3C candles to burn, laundry products and sinus rinses 5). Get rid of carpet, curtains, plants, clutter, 6). Treat sinuses with sinus rinse protocol. 7) Diffused air probiotics: [BetterAirUS.com](#) (Use coupon code I0S1GTKV0T for 10% off)
3. **Limit total toxin exposures** by eating organic food, no sugar, no gluten/corn grains, non-toxic personal care and cleaning products and no fragrances except pure essential oils.
4. **TURN OFF your Wi-Fi router** (especially at night when it's not being used). Don't use the

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“screen” in your bedroom.

- 5. Address gastrointestinal, “leaky gut” issues** with a gut-healing protocol to prevent toxins from being reabsorbed—diet is critical!
- 6. Do not consume alcohol!** Good daily bowel movements are critical. Consume lots of magnesium, psyllium, pectins (helpful if tolerated), glutamine, colostrum, quercetin, Vitamin A. If you’re reacting to foods and supplements, take a careful antihistamine approach with homeopathics, brain training, topical nutrients and others. Probiotics can be helpful with mycotoxins.
- 7. Treat chronic sinus drainage and/or infections.** Begin with nightly sinus rinse saline washes with added Biocidin and colloidal silver. Use Xlear nasal spray several times per day. Treat intranasal MARCON’s Biofilms with Rx BEG+IB/ or EDTA/Colloidal Silver protocol and anti-fungal Rx. Ozone diffused through eardrums can be miraculous!
- 8. Upregulate liver, gallbladder and kidney detoxification channels.** Many herbals like milk thistle, nettles, dandelion and bile salts, TUDCA and phosphatidyl choline, are helpful along with NAC and glutathione. Homeopathics and liver massage can be helpful if you can’t tolerate supplements. Activated B vitamins are important.
- 9. Mobilize lymphatics.** Move toxins from inside the fat cells and lymph system with hot Epsom salt baths, lymphatic drainage therapy, homeopathy, dry skin brushing, loofa sponge, sweating, coffee enemas, colonics, [far infrared sauna](#), glutathione, using a mini trampoline or “Chi machine” can also be helpful.
- 10. Bind the mobilized toxins** with a binding agent such as charcoal, clay or pectin, beta-glucan, chlorella or cholestyramine, so toxins don’t reenter circulation from increased intestinal permeability (i.e. leaky gut).
- 11. Support nutritional deficits, inflammation, and mitochondrial function** with Lipoic acid, methylated B vitamins, CoQ10, turmeric, fish oils, phosphatidyl choline, minerals, electrolytes, Vitamin C, and other supportive nutrients. IV nutritional therapies can also be helpful.
- 12. Protect damaged cells** while moving toxins utilizing Alpha lipoic acid and glutathione. Glutathione (oral and IV) acts as both a powerful antioxidant and detoxifier. Utilize other antioxidants, too .[Vit C, Turmeric, Resveratrol]
- 13. Repair damaged cell membranes and mitochondria** with [Phosphatidyl choline](#) and butyrate (PK protocol) oral and/or IV, along with high-quality, dense nutritional organic foods.
- 14. To remove toxins more quickly from the brain,** strongly consider hyperbaric oxygen to help cells oxygenate, along with IV phospholipid exchange [PK protocol] to carry nutrients and antioxidants.
- 15. Nutritional IVs:** IV Vitamin C, B vitamin/Myers’ cocktails, ozone, and intravenous ultraviolet light can all be helpful strategies for the complex, chronically ill client.

### RECOMMENDED TESTING FOR YOU (at a minimum, consider 1, 2, and 4)

- 1. Online VCS test** at [VCS Test.com](#) or [SurvivingMold.com](#). Buy a package of 5-10 as these should be used to monitor your progress. And, don’t be surprised if it gets worse before it gets better.

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- 2. Urine Mycotoxins: GPL Labs or Real Time Lab-urine Mycotoxin Test.** GPL tests for a few different markers than RTL. RTL is expensive, but can often identify highly-toxic trichothecenes associated with black mold. Check with your insurance company for coverage. Pros and cons for each include cost and spectrum mycotoxins. If you can afford it, it’s good to do both.
- 3. Blood: Shoemaker panel markers** from LabCorp can measure cytokines and CD57, TGFB, MSH, osmolality, anti-diuretic hormone, MMP9, etc. HLA genetics are not necessary, but can be interesting. [we are finding they are less relevant to the treatment and often not covered with insurance].
- 4. Blood, full biochemistry** via Quest, Vibrant or LabCorp to measure kidney, liver, glucose, inflammation, hormones, thyroid.
- 5. Organic acid testing** via NutraEval [Genova] or Great Plains Lab OAT can assess nutrient deficiency and state of gut bacterial dysbiosis/fungal overgrowth, neurotransmitters, and detoxification pathways.
- 6. Do a deep nasal sinus culture** to rule out MARCONs (Multiple Antibiotic Resistant Coagulase Negative Staph) and fungal overgrowth.
- 7. Check hormones** with a urine/saliva adrenal stress index from ZRT labs, Diagnostechs, DUTCH.
- 8. GI tests** can be done via a SIBO breath test or GI Map stool test.

### RECOMMENDED TESTING FOR YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- 1. Extensive home history, health questionnaire and visual inspection with humidity and thermal imaging check.** Home humidity meters, and thermal wall scanners available from hardware stores. Use this home evaluation resource.
- 2. ERMI kit: vacuum dust collection DNA sample** to understand your Environmental Relative Mold Index for mold species via Mycometrics or EMSL labs.
- 3. EMMA kit: dust collection DNA sample.** Use a Swiffer or cut out a 3” x 3” area of an A/C filter. This is a good test to evaluate areas of concern for the worst types of mold.
- 4. Mold test plates from [Immunolytics.com](#).** These are good to take to work or school environments where you may want to be discreet about testing.
- 5. Air quality testing for your home:** DIY kits are available, but you should call a qualified professional if molds of significance are identified, and get disturbed air samples, not just an air sampler in the middle of the room. [GotMoldTestKit.com](#) and IAQRx have air cartridges available with interpretations of results.
- 6. Surface/Tape sampling** will come with some of the air testing kits.
- 7. Hygrometer for humidity sampling** (humidity should be < 50%).
- 8. Hire a mold inspector** who uses all of the above techniques and asks about your health issues. A quality mold inspection requires several methods of sampling and a thorough inspection. Contact a clinician from American Academy of Environmental Medicine or from the International Society of Environmentally Acquired Illness for their recommendations.

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## The following resources are also of merit:

- [AmericanMoldExperts.com](http://AmericanMoldExperts.com)
- [TheMoldGuyInc.com](http://TheMoldGuyInc.com)
- [GotMold.com](http://GotMold.com)
- [TheMoldPros.com](http://TheMoldPros.com)
- [Immunolytics.com](http://Immunolytics.com)
- [RealTimeLabs.com](http://RealTimeLabs.com)

## Diet and Nutrients for Recovery

These may vary depending on your symptoms. see [MoldDetoxDiet.com](http://MoldDetoxDiet.com)

### The fundamentals of recovery:

- Eat organic, non-GMO, primarily plant-based with high quality range-fed and/or wild-caught proteins and good fats (olive oils, avocados, ghee/clarified butter, coconut oil)
- No wheat (gluten), corn, soy
- No sugar
- Nothing processed
- No alcohol or soft drinks

### Depending on your symptoms, you may need a more targeted approach:

- Autoimmune issues: AIP Paleo Diet and gut-repair protocol
- SIBO/SIFO: FODMAP diet and nutrients
- MCS/Histamine: 4-Day Low Histamine Rotation Diet (if severely reactive)
- Mitochondrial Support Diet (Wahl's protocol) and nutrients for neurodegenerative disease
- Ketogenic Diet for cancer, cardio metabolic, weight, diabetes, neurologic issues

For more detailed diet and detox information consider ordering the [Mold Detox Diet Program](#)

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## SINUS PROTOCOL

Keeping the sinus free of allergens, pollens and molds is critical! If you have a history of recurrent sinus infections there is a high likelihood of chronic biofilm layers with resistant bacteria, fungi and molds in it. Daily sinus rinsing is a must! Sinus rinsing also incredibly helpful to help clear brain fog, migraines and other headaches as well as improving symptoms of depression!

1. Use NeilMed Sinus Rinse with 6-10 drops of Biocidin and ½ tsp of colloidal silver once/day
2. Xlear is a great over the counter product to carry and utilize throughout the day.
3. Or order nasal products from [MicroBalanceHealthproducts.com](http://MicroBalanceHealthproducts.com).

You may need a compounded prescription nasal spray Rx that includes EDTA and an anti-fungal such as Itriconazole or Amphotericin. Work with your practitioner.

Repopulate the healthy bacteria in the sinuses by ordering [L sakei powder](#), dipping a clean q tip and sniffing into nose after rinsing with the products above.

## OTHER RESOURCES

- American Academy of Environmental Medicine AAEM.org
- SEAI.org [International Society for Environmentally Acquired Illness] great resource for public and professionals alike]
- NeuroLipidResearch.org for information on phospholipid exchange and PK protocol