

Black Mold—An Unrelenting Scourge

By Cheryl Casati
Epoch Times Staff (Feb. 24)

Black mold and its toxic properties have been a serious health risk for centuries. It surfaces in homes where wet conditions and humidity fester, producing the conditions for its persistent growth.

Insurance companies, landlords, real estate agents, and others have often denied its devastating health effects. As a result, procedures provided to clean or medically identify mold exposure are often inadequate. The health problems vary with the exposure and can lead to long term problems or in some cases death. Black mold presents a quandary of international proportions. However it is not a new problem, as evidenced in a quote from Leviticus 14:39-47:

"On the seventh day the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls, he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town. If the mildew reappears in the house after the stones have been torn out and the house is scraped and plastered, it is a destructive mildew and the house is unclean. It must be torn down - its stones, timbers and all the plaster - and taken out of town."

So the black mold scourge has been known and dealt with since biblical times.

As black mold is a naturally occurring growth in nature the research available to the public is often small and conflicting. The Illinois Department of Health states black mold is Trichothecene mycotoxin (T-2) and is a naturally occurring poison produced by fungi. According to a report from the U.S. Army on "Biowarfare Research and How it Impacts Mold Illness," it states, "Molds produce neurotoxic substances. Most people are familiar with poisons from a black widow spider or scorpion - mold neurotoxins are very similar. The most toxic neurotoxins from mold are called trichothecenes; they are known to be neurotoxic and are produced by more than 60 molds, especially the common indoor molds Stachybotrys, Fusarium, and Trichoderma."

The Army began its research approximately 30 years ago when "Yellow Rain" was used in Southeast Asia. This resulted in a plethora of Army research into neurotoxins and their effect on humans. This research is now declassified and available from the Surgeon General's office. The research is

significant because it involved human subjects. The Russians began their research into black mold in the 1920's. "Yellow Rain" is the name for black mold which was used as a chemical-biological agent by the Russian's in Southeast Asia (Vietnam) in the 1970's. Russia also used Yellow Rain against Afghanistan. Yellow Rain can be used to clear out an area of Indigenous

most comprehensive coverage of the effects of black mold, including generic mycotoxicosis, a systemic poisoning caused by toxins produced by fungal organisms.

More research data was recently released by the U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO) that admits the mold is dangerous but is not as comprehensive in its coverage as the military report.

On Sept. 30, 2008, the GAO published a summary of the health effects caused by exposure to indoor mold, and is appropriately titled "Indoor Mold," and subtitled "Better Coordination of Research on Health Effects and More Consistent Guidance Would Improve Federal Efforts." The study was introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy.

Already this year stories related to black mold and its harm have been surfacing in the press. The Epoch Times reported on Jan. 15, 2009, a black mold contamination in a Swedish school and Fox News covered a story on Jan. 11, 2009, of a Loudoun, Virginia family awarded 4.75 million dollars from the contractor of their new million dollar home for negligence which allowed their home and all their belongings to become infested with black mold that created severe health problems.

people and within 24 hours occupying forces can move in to inhabit the area. Again, "Yellow Rain" is said in this report to lose all toxic effects within 24 hours after being exposed to oxygen.

The United States Military Medicine Manual, Chapter 34, covers T2 mold research definitively stating its toxic capacity ([CLICK HERE](#)). This manual may be the



Black mold growing on the wall of a living room in a home that was flooded. (Marie Sanchez)

Just Breathing in Katrina-Flooded Homes Poses Health Risks

Environmental News Service, Feb 11



This New Orleans resident searches for salvageable items in her home following Hurricane Katrina. Many of the homes were like this one with mold damage to the ceiling. (Photo by Andrea Booher)

Homes flooded by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 may contain harmful levels of airborne contaminants in addition to polluted sediment deposits, finds new research from scientists at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Indoor gases, mold films, and aerosols may have exposed residents, first responders, and demolition crews to dangerous contaminant levels without the need for direct skin contact, according to the modeling study published in the April 2009 issue of "Environmental Engineering Science," a peer-reviewed journal published by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.

The model published by Nicholas Ashley, Kalliat Valsaraj, and Louis Thibodeaux, from Louisiana State, details the possible types and levels of volatile and semi-volatile organic pollutants that might be present inside the flooded homes.

When made landfall on the Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coasts on August 29, 2005, failure of protective levees around the city of New Orleans resulted in floodwaters inundating numerous residential areas to a depth of six to nine feet for nearly two weeks.

The floodwaters carried with them suspended sediments from Lake Pontchartrain, along with other contaminants accumulated in the submerged neighborhoods, the authors say.

When floodwaters were later pumped from residential areas back into Lake Pontchartrain, sediment remained behind.

"Because the houses sat unoccupied for weeks and months after the storm, volatile and semivolatile sediment pollutants partition into the vapor space inside the home, where they present a gas-phase exposure to persons entering the home," the study states.

The warm, damp conditions inside the flooded homes led to the growth of mold on walls, furniture, and other interior surfaces, which may have absorbed contaminant gases. These mold films in turn emit contaminated spores into the air inside the home.

The authors conclude that these mold spores may represent a significant sink for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs; pesticides and esters such as phthalates, which are plasticizers.

They also mention aldehydes and organic acids as contribu-

tors to the airborne contaminants inside the flooded houses.

"An exposure assessment that only considers exposure to gas-phase materials of these classes may under predict the total mass of pollutant which a person may be inhaling," the authors write.

These newly identified inhalation exposure routes could present a significant health risk to people who walk inside and breathe the air in contaminated homes, even if there is no skin contact with the sediment covering the floors or the mold growing on the walls and other surfaces, concludes the paper, entitled, "Multiphase Contaminant Distributions Inside Flooded Homes in New Orleans, Louisiana, after Hurricane Katrina: A Modeling Study."

Finally, the authors warn, the PAHs detected in the sediment and mold films may be cause for concern when contaminated housing materials are disposed of.

"This may represent a special problem for waste incinerators where products of incomplete combustion may release partially oxidized PAH or other species to the air," they advise. "In landfills or other disposal facilities, regular monitoring of run-off effluents or waste streams may be needed."

"This is an excellent and important study by one of the top research teams in the nation," said Domenico Grasso, PhD, editor-in-chief and dean and professor in the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences at the University of Vermont-Burlington, who was not involved in the study. "It will help us better prepare first responders for the additional risks that may be posed by such events."

"Results indicate that prolonged contact with contaminated sediment, vapor-phase organics, and pollutant-laden aerosolized mold spores, may result in a significant exposure of New Orleans area residents and recovery workers to toxic materials," the authors write. "Future research efforts should further probe the effects of mold as a transport and partitioning medium for volatile and semivolatile materials, because experimental data in this area are severely lacking."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency warns that exposure to mold can cause respiratory tract infections, especially for infants, children, immune-compromised patients, pregnant women, the elderly and individuals with existing respiratory conditions, allergies, multiple chemical sensitivity, and asthma.

Lawsuit: St. Joseph's Hospital mold killed three children

By Colleen Jenkins, SP Times
February 3, 2009

TAMPA — Three pediatric oncology patients died within a month of one another at St. Joseph's Hospital last spring.

According to a lawsuit filed today, cancer didn't kill them.

Instead, says attorney Steve Yerrid, the children were exposed to mold released during a construction project at the hospital. The mold caused fatal infections, the lawsuit said.

A hospital spokeswoman was unable to immediately respond to the allegations.

The court document details the sad fates of the three children.

Mathew Gliddon died April 16 at age 5. The child suffered from acute lymphoblastic leukemia. A pathologist said he died as the result of chemotherapy and fungi infection, the lawsuit said.

Sierra Kesler died May 3 at age 9. Her cause of death was listed as fungal pneumonia with underlying acute lymphoblastic leukemia, according to the lawsuit.

Kaylie Gunn-Rimes died May 13 at age 2. She had been off chemotherapy and was cancer-free for six months before her death, the lawsuit said. But after being exposed to mold, she developed a massive fungal infection in her lungs that killed her, the suit said.

Yerrid spoke on behalf of the families today.

"They know that the system can never bring back their children," he said. "But they know that the system can deliver safety for other children."

The attorney could not say if there were other

victims.

The lawsuit says the hospital failed to properly protect the young patients during the renovation work and contends that officials should have known it would generate moderate to high levels of dust.

"There are simple protocols that should and could have been followed," Yerrid said.

Fla. senator says courthouse sickened him

UPI

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., says just touring the troubled Sam M. Gibbons Federal Courthouse in Tampa left him feeling ill from mold and mildew exposure.

This is totally unacceptable, Nelson said, adding that he plans to raise Cain until the U.S. General Services Administration fixes the problems with the building.

The 12-year-old, 363,000-square-foot courthouse has been diagnosed with sick-building syndrome. Employees in the \$81-million, glass-and-limestone building have

been found three times more likely to have adult-onset asthma and other respiratory ailments than other federal workers, The Tampa (Fla.) Tribune reported Tuesday.

Employees complain that shoddy construction has left the building with leaking windows and roofs, mold has taken over many areas, rugs have been pulled up from water damage and wood floors are peeling back.

Nelson was called in after repair projects, started a year ago, hit a snag between the contractor hired to fix the leaks and the General Services Administration.



U.S. Senator Bill Nelson — former astronaut and former Insurance Commissioner — is a very cool guy with a wonderful family.

POA's continuing coverage of this important case

chronically ill, and they had no idea why.

their youngest daughter.

Sick House, Suffering Family

Mold Leads to Big Health Problems, Legal Battle in Loudoun

By Jonathan Mummolo, Washington Post Staff Writer

Feb. 2009

But over the next year, they noticed a pattern: The more they were out of the house, the better they felt. After doing some detective work, they discovered that the source of their pain was the place they called home.

In court, the company denied that the way it assembled the house led to the mold, said it was not responsible for cleaning it up and did not think that the mold made the Mengs sick.

Barbara Drees Jones, vice president of marketing for Kentucky-based Drees, declined to comment on the case because attorneys for Drees are going

back to court Friday to ask the judge to set aside the verdict. Kurt C. Rommel, an attorney for Drees, said it would be inappropriate to comment until the judge enters a decision on the jury verdict.

Wendy Meng said their new home sat on the premier lot in the neighborhood, on half an acre, with a pretty pond behind it.

She and her husband loved the wrought iron staircase, Brazilian cherry flooring, high ceilings and three fireplaces.

"We were so excited. This was my dream house," she said. "I used to come down in the morning and pinch myself. It was so beautiful."

Before moving into their new 5,900-square-foot house in the Tall Cedar Estates subdivision in November 2005, the Mengs said, they asked the Drees company to fix a few problems, including leaky windows in the basement.



The migraines began three months after Wendy Meng moved into her new [Loudoun County](#) house. They lasted for hours, forcing her to sleep in her closet because she was so sensitive to light. Then her heart rate started spiking.

Before long, her 8-year-old daughter, Emma, started having headaches, feeling dizzy and suffering nosebleeds. Wendy's husband, Paul, a runner on the track team in college, was short of breath after climbing the stairs. A raft of tests by doctors came back negative. The Mengs were

Shoddy construction and unmended leaks had let moisture in, allowing toxin-producing mold to grow and spread through the three-story house, the Mengs said. A Loudoun jury recently awarded the family \$4.75 million, among the largest awards in a mold case in Virginia.

Jurors said the home's builder, the Drees Co., was negligent and violated the Virginia Consumer Protection Act. They said the company was responsible for the couple's health problems but not Emma's,

Sick House

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Drees told the Mengs that the windows had been fixed, but puddles in the basement persisted after the family moved into its \$900,000 home in the Chantilly area of Loudoun, the Mengs said. They later learned that Drees had not allowed the house's frame to dry before installing drywall, creating the perfect conditions for mold to thrive all over the house, the Mengs said.

In February 2006, the migraines began.

"We were very scared. I was in bed 95 percent of the time," said Wendy Meng, 37. "All we ever wanted was to be able to have a home."

On March 30, 2006, she went to see her family doctor in Herndon, who noticed one of her pupils was dilated. The doctor called an ambulance, and she was rushed to a hospital and given a CAT scan, she said. She was given heavy painkillers, referred to a neurologist and released, she said.

She was readmitted to the hospital for four days in April with a racing pulse and high blood pressure. She was referred to a cardiologist, and another battery of tests was inconclusive, she said.

The pattern of tests, referrals and failed treatments would continue over the next year, Wendy Meng said. She was hospitalized seven times and experienced memory loss, heart palpitations and difficulty breathing, all without knowing why, she said. Meanwhile, the rest of her family was getting sick, too. Emma, now 11, had her nose cauterized with acid three times to prevent the bleeding, Wendy Meng said. Paul Meng, 48, and daughter Kaleigh, 12, developed asthma.

During trips to the emergency room, Wendy noticed that her pain would often subside. Just a few hours out of the house was often all it took, she said.

"My husband could see it on my face," she said. "He could physically see the pain leave."

In January 2007, the company had the basement windows repaired, and Paul

Meng bought a home testing kit for mold and radon, on a hunch that air quality might be a factor, the Mengs said.

He sent the samples to a lab, which reported finding "unusual mold conditions." The couple then hired professionals to repeat the tests, with the same results. Drees was informed, and in February 2007, the company hired a contractor to do an inspection. The inspection turned up mold, and the contractor made recommendations for removing it.

The next month, the Mengs received a letter from Drees saying the company was not responsible for carrying out the recommendations, according to court papers filed by the Mengs. A Drees executive told Paul Meng that the illness was "all in your wife's head," Paul Meng said.

In April, Wendy Meng took a four-day trip to Williamsburg. Her headaches stopped completely, she

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said, and "the pain just lifted." When she returned home, the migraines quickly returned and the next weekend she was hospitalized again.

They had no choice but to move, the Mengs said.

Taking only their beds, a couch, a table, some teddy bears and clothes that had been dry cleaned, the family moved to a South Riding townhouse that April. The sickness continued, but to a lesser degree, they said. The mold had contaminated their possessions and had followed them to their new home, they later learned. They filed a lawsuit against Drees in Loudoun County Circuit Court that August.

"We kept on hoping that Drees was going to do the right thing," Wendy Meng said. "All we asked them to do was put us up somewhere while they got the house completely cleaned . . . and they wouldn't do it."

Paul Meng, who co-owns a company that automates systems in commercial buildings, said he never wanted it to go to court. "Court is the last resort. . . . We still trusted them. We had expected them to come through for us."

Last March, the Mengs went to see Ritchie Shoemaker, a doctor on Maryland's Eastern Shore who specializes in illnesses caused by water-damaged buildings. He said mold and other microbes in the

house had produced toxins that made the Mengs sick.

Shoemaker said their possessions had been contaminated, too, and the family threw away almost everything, including family photos, baptismal gowns and toys. "He said we had to get rid of everything we had," Wendy Meng said. "When we moved [again] . . . we didn't even bring a sock."

The Mengs moved to Aldie in March last year. In September, they went to a bio-detox center in South Carolina for about a month to remove toxins that had built up in their bodies. The children missed about a month of school, and "that's been challenging," Paul Meng said.

Among other treatments, the Mengs sat in 150-degree saunas for three hours a day.

"I felt like I got my life back," Wendy Meng said, though she and other family members still have problems. Paul and Kaleigh have asthma. Wendy and Kaleigh are on a daily regimen of oxygen treatments, and Wendy has painful muscle spasms in her neck and shoulders from time to time.

Chin S. Yang, a mycologist who testified as an expert witness in the trial, said that mold grows in houses when excessive moisture is present and that the problem became more common after drywall largely re-

placed plaster in home construction. He said the paper in drywall contains sugar polymers that can serve as food for organisms.

"What you have is [Drees] not using common sense," said David H. Wise, the Mengs' attorney. "They didn't supervise their subcontractors. . . . They didn't care when water intruded into the house during construction."

The Mengs still own the Chantilly house, but they said it would cost an estimated \$400,000 to remove the mold and make necessary repairs. They're not sure what to do with it, they said, and are reluctant to sell it for fear it would cause another family health problems.

The Mengs said problems with the house have cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical expenses, legal fees, discarded furniture and other expenses. But they can be replaced.

"If you don't have your health," Wendy Meng said, "it doesn't matter what you have."



The Meng family in their rented Aldie home. From left to right, Paul, Kaleigh, 12, Emma, 11, and Wendy. (John McDonnell)

CNN'S CAMPBELL BROWN BATTLES BILL O'REILLY, KEITH OLBERMANN AND MOLD

BY RICHARD HUFF
DAILY NEWS TV EDITOR

[CNN](#) anchor [Campbell Brown](#) has become an expert in mold.

She's had no choice.

Just before the inauguration, and after months of struggling with her baby's unexplained illness, Campbell, her child and her husband, [Dan Senior](#), were forced to flee their mold-ridden apartment without their belongings.

"When something like this happens," Brown told the Daily News, "you become an expert in toxic mold. But I certainly realized how fortunate that I am, in this economic climate, that we had the ability to get out. When they said, 'You need to get your baby and get out now,' we were able to get out."

She's been dealing with the housing issue - she and her family have been in a hotel since January - while anchoring a nightly show during what has been a huge news cycle. And never once did she let her problems at home infiltrate her work.

"I do think, in many ways, [work] was a diversion," she said.

Last September, her son, Eli James (now 14 months old), developed a cold that wouldn't end.

"It was crazy to me," Brown said. "The doctors couldn't figure it out. I would get home at 9:30 or 10, and he would wake himself up with these horrible coughing attacks."

But Brown noticed two days into a trip to Florida, the symptoms stopped.

Later, she spotted something on the wall of their apartment that looked odd. After some research, she was convinced it was mold - and her son was showing the symptoms of exposure.

Mold specialists confirmed her findings and had them leave. Once they were out, her son immediately got better.

"It was the not knowing - and as a mother, to know something's wrong with your child, you instinctively feel, this wasn't right," she said. "Finding out, there was a great sense of relief."

Brown joined CNN in fall 2007 after an 11-year-run with [NBC](#). She began anchoring the nightly "Election

Center." She went on maternity leave in December, and returned in March 2008 to anchor "Campbell Brown: No Bias, No Bull," a nightly, hourlong show. Like most, it became focused on the election, and now the new administration and the economy.

Airing at 8 p.m., the show faces [Fox News'](#) dominant "[The O'Reilly Factor](#)" and "Countdown" on [MSNBC](#).

Brown said she's had to show more of herself to be competitive in the cable news field.

"You have to be willing to open yourself up a little more to find an audience," she said, "and you have to be willing to push the envelope a little bit." And she's done that on-air, while dealing with turmoil off-camera.

The couple still don't have all of their belongings back, but they expect to move into a new apartment as soon as this weekend. Brown is due with their second child in early April. [Roland Martin](#) will sub for her while she's away.

"That's the beauty of our jobs. ... you have a deadline every day," she said of balancing work and her home crisis. "Was it a challenge? On certain days, certainly. But we have a great team of people and they've been really supportive."



BEAT STRESS, AGING AND ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS NATURALLY AND WITHOUT A PRESCRIPTION

POA, in association with Sabre Sciences, one of the fastest growing endocrine testing and support laboratories in the U.S., is now offering a cutting-edge and affordable line of products designed to naturally supplement imbalances commonly associated with aging, chronic stress and the build-up of environmental toxins and pollutants that disrupt balance.

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chronic stress and/or environmental toxins.

If the hormones produced by the endocrine system are imbalanced, the following symptoms most often occur: wrinkles and loss of facial skin tone, plummeting energy level, loss of libido (or “sex drive”), mood swings, depression, premature aging, memory loss, sleeplessness, weight problems, digestive problems, hair loss, chronic nonspecific pain, lower back pain, bloating, brittle hair and nails, cravings, addictions, problems associated with a compromised immune system, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. The good news though is imbalances can be scientifically supplemented — safely, inexpensively and effectively. If we didn’t think you would agree, we would not offer them.

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