

Break the Mold Part II
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In Part I, we looked at how mold causes illness and how to suspect it, and to discover where the exposure comes from. We looked at how widespread the problem is with water damaged buildings and how important it is that we are aware of what mold can do.

Now we want to see how to recover. Healing takes place in steps, one stage at a time, and it doesn't happen in a straight line. The Herxheimer reaction occurs when treatment results in the dying mold organisms' spewing out toxins. This makes a person sicker temporarily, and the treatment may need to be gentle and cautious at first, gauged according to how the treatment is being tolerated.

The author describes 5 tools for recovery: Avoidance, Fundamentals, Protect, Repair, and Fight.

The first step is 1. Avoidance, 2. Avoidance, 3. Avoidance. Get out. Take nothing with you. Prevent exposures. Leave the sick environment with no time frame to return. Take as little with you as possible, as they may have spores and toxins. Remediate environment, diet, and habits. Avoid new exposures. If mold is growing in your sinuses, that needs to be treated.

The following need to be addressed in Avoidance: Habitat, Air Quality, Foods to Avoid, Supplement and Medication Cautions, and Hobbies and Habits.

Habitat needs to be remediated, discussed in detail later. Air quality needs to be cleared with a good filter that takes out mycotoxins, size down to 0.1 microns. This is just to remove cross-contamination from remediation. It is no substitute for remediation. It can't keep up with an environment that is constantly spewing out mycotoxins.

Foods to avoid are those that can have traces of molds or that can feed yeast or mold. Some are sweets, dried fruits, baked goods, mushrooms, corn, potatoes, pickled foods, vinegar, soy sauce, cantaloupe, grapes, aged or moldy cheeses, peanuts, sweetened beverages, fruit juice, alcohol, oolong and black tea, cider, and kombucha. After all signs of mold and mold illness are gone for a while, these foods could be tolerated cautiously.

Supplements such as medicinal mushrooms, *Saccharomyces boulardii*, and any supplements processed with *Aspergillus* or yeast are to be avoided. Also, some antibiotics are mycotoxins.

Hobbies: Take special care or avoid historic restorations, rare book collections, brewing, bread-making, cheese work, etc.

Trust what your body is telling you. If something's making you feel bad, avoid it.

In fundamentals, restoring biorhythms that the mold has disrupted is important, by waking, sleeping, eating, exercising, moving bowels, each at the same time each day. Mold toxins overwhelm the “sewer lines”, so keeping bowels regular, 2-3x/day, moving air, water, food in and out, (like the “hokey pokey,”) sweating, breathing deeply, breathing outside air, forest bathing, drinking 1/ 2 your weight in pounds, in ounces of water daily, and eating protective and mold-fighting foods such as colorful vegetables and fruit, avocado, olives and oil, fresh seeds and nuts (not stored), eggs, curry, parsley, garlic, onion, chives, leeks, cloves, cumin, rosemary, sage, thyme, oregano, basil, coffee, unsweetened chocolate, and green tea. If the gut does not move fast enough, with bloating, abdominal pain, gas, you may have small intestinal bacterial overgrowth, (SIBO), which happens often with mold toxic people. You may want to do a breath test for it. Dr. Allison Siebecker's book, The SIBO Book, can be helpful. Mold illness is a “canary” illness. Some people are genetically programmed with vulnerability to mold. Read Dirty Genes, by Dr. Benjamin Lynch.

In the “Protect” strategy, binders can remove mycotoxins that circulate through the liver, bile, intestine, and get reabsorbed into the blood, to be sent out through the liver and bile again. To interrupt this cycle, these substances bind the mycotoxins to go out through the stool. Many fat soluble toxins like those from mold, can’t easily be transformed in the liver to go out through the urine, and they have to go out with the bile.

Foods and supplements with insoluble fiber can bind the toxins and also promote good bowel motility. Some supplements are flax seed, chia seed, rice bran, oat bran, and psyllium husk. Dr. Crinnion especially recommends rice bran, not just for mold toxins but for other fat soluble toxins such as chlorinated pesticides, PCB’s, etc. If something stronger is needed to bind the bile-laden toxins, prescription cholestyramine can be used, but heed the caution that it can cause constipation, which we do not want. Also, strong binders could bind your nutrients and supplements, so take them at a time away from when you consume those other things.

Cholegogues are bile movers, which are bitter tasting plants and herbs. They help the liver “spit out” those toxins along with bile, and they also stimulate the bowel. Bitter greens such as arugula, endive, watercress, kale, dandelion greens, green tea can do this. Something a little stronger is “Sweetish Bitters.” If you already have diarrhea, go easy on the cholegogues. Also, if you have gallstones, bile movers could expel a stone into the duct to cause a gallbladder attack. If all else fails, do a mud bath to draw toxins out through the skin.

DHA, an omega-3 oil found mostly in fish, protects the brain, quercetin protects the sinuses, gut, and gallbladder, milk thistle protects liver and kidneys, and turmeric is chief protector, helps detoxification, antioxidants, liver, and kidneys.

In the “Repair” phase, lymphatic massage, from a specially trained lymphatic massage therapist, can help the lymph to move to expel toxins. The lymph is often congested in mold toxic people. Sauna, hot baths, and exercise not only remove toxins through the sweat, but improve blood circulation. Vegetables of all colors of the rainbow have bioflavonoids,

quercetin, polyphenols, lycopenes, etc., and mitigate toxic effects of molds. But be sure they are organic, or at least not among the “dirty dozen.” See the Environmental Working Group’s website to check on them. Resveratrol, a very potent antioxidant, glutathione, chief among antioxidants for mold toxins, melatonin, the most potent brain antioxidant, CoQ10, the most potent heart antioxidant, and alpha lipoic acid, are all mainstays of antioxidant support. Glutathione is not well absorbed orally, except for liposomal glutathione, which tastes horrible. Alpha lipoic acid and n-acetyl cysteine are precursors that boost the production of glutathione.

In the “Fight” stage, remember that when mold senses it is under attack, it digs its heels in and fights back with digestive bloating, ringing ears, sweet cravings, insomnia etc. She says it’s like cleaning out a bear’s cage with the bear still in it. But not to worry, keep plugging on. The herbal antifungals, Pau D’Arco, Holy Basil, Olive leaf, Usnea, Thyme, and Oil of Oregano go on the offensive with more resilience than pharmaceutical antifungals. They don’t allow resistance to develop as easily, and they do a lot of other actions as well, in the repair and protect functions and in immune support. It is important to continue the mold fighters until well past the disappearance of symptoms, and the herbs are OK to use long term. Nasal antifungals may be necessary even in the absence of nasal or sinus symptoms. Mold can colonize the sinuses, and after you think the mold is all gone, they send out scouts and rebuild in the rest of your body. The best way is to use essential oils, colloidal silver, and xylitol in a nebulizer. The following essential oils are effective at killing sinus mold: Cedar, Rosemary, Holy Basil, Cumin, Tea tree, Thyme, Cloves, Frankincense, Eucalyptus, and Scotch Pine. In the book she gives instructions on how to prepare the sprays.

After you are well into the fight stage, you can start to use biofilm busters. Don’t use them too soon, or you get too much Herxheimer reaction, as the mold colonies get disturbed too quickly. Dr. Paul Anderson gives instruction on how to use the enzymes to break up biofilm at his website, consultdranderson.com. Then to deal with Herx reactions if too severe, cut back on the treatment temporarily, do Epsom salts baths, drink lemon juice, and eat vegetable broths for a few days.

She warns that after all mold symptoms have gone, continue the treatment for at least a month longer. Mold can come back from the dead like a “Zombie” if you get too confident too soon and think it’s gone.

The last section in the book is about buildings. There is no such thing as “safe” mildew or “not the bad kind” of mold. Be sure you have a certified, well trained inspector, and the same goes for the remediator, but they should be two separate people, so the inspector can check on the remediation job, with more objectivity. Credentials to look for are: BBEC - Building Biology Environmental Consultant, ACAC - American Counsel for Accredited Certification, and IICRC - Institute of Inspection, Cleaning, and Restoration Certification. The following accreditations I found in the Textbook of Environmental Medicine, by Pizzarno and Crinnion: The AIHA - American Industrial Hygiene Association, CMC - Certified Mold Consultant, CIEC - Certified Indoor Environmental Consultant, CIEC - Certified Indoor Environmental Consultant, and CIH - Certified Industrial Hygienist with Mold Experience. After the remediators have gone, have the inspectors re-test. If you are collecting dust, get the top surfaces of picture frames, tall shelves, books, kitchen cabinets, trim, etc.

Remediators should seal off the area well, wear protective gear, and have negative air pressure to vacuum the air out of the disturbed area. Remember that the best respirators can filter out spores, but they cannot filter out mycotoxins. People with mold illness, and people who have any other chronic illness, pregnant women, and young children, should stay out of any water damaged building.

Rules of the thumb for remediation: 1. No spray and pray. 2. No seal and deal, thinking you can paint over it. Mycotoxins can come through any sealant. 3. When in doubt, cut it out. Even if it just looks like maybe it’s OK. 4. Take out more than you think. Better to take too much than not enough, or you will have to do the whole thing over again.

The last chapter is prevention. The mold’s weaknesses: dryness, sunlight, air movement, dust-free spaces, lack of clutter, and mold-killing essential oils. Keep those conditions, and you are a long way to preventing it. The

way modern houses are built, you might think they read a manual on “The care and feeding of mold.” Airtight homes that trap humidity inside, built with materials that are partly digested, drywall, particle board, etc., and sealed water pipes behind walls so you can’t tell when they are leaking. It’s just a matter of when the water finds its way out of a pipe.

No finished basements. Her mold inspector says she finds mold in almost every finished basement, despite use of humidifiers. Basements need to breathe. Put down pads for particular activities, then take them up. No carpeting. Keep storage on metal shelves, off the floor. No cardboard on the floor. Change car cabin filters annually, change furnace filters 2x/ year. Dust with gusto.

The author narrates this journey with stories, that illustrate poignant points with humor, much more than you get with reading this article. The book also has the mold symptom questionnaire and has much more detailed instructions for specific treatments than you can get here plus many resources listed in the back. If you suspect you have mold illness, you have to get this book, or one that she recommends, like Neil Nathan’s Toxic. Break the Mold is unsurpassed in it’s readability, thoroughness, and the author’s personal journey of healing from her own illness, knowing first hand the pitfalls along the way. I attended her lectures and question - answer sessions, and I was impressed with her authoritative knowledge and advice. Even if you don’t have mold illness, somebody you know probably has, and mold-damage buildings are far too prevalent and are on the increase, with more flooding occurring as part of climate change. Spread the word. People need to know about how formidable mold can be.