

Black Mold Symptoms + 12 Natural Remedies...

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Black mold exposure and black mold poisoning can cause a wide range of health problems. Some black mold symptoms can actually be really serious. You may have found this article from googling “black mold in shower” or “mold in house.” Unfortunately, mold problems are not unusual in the home, and the shower is a classic location to find black mold flourishing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, molds in general are very common in homes and buildings and they can grow anywhere indoors where there is moisture. You can help your body recover if you’ve been exposed to black mold. You can also naturally rid your home of black mold and prevent it in the first place! Black mold symptoms are highly unpleasant so you really don’t want to deal with them if you don’t have to.

What Is Black Mold?

Black mold is easily distinguishable from other molds because, not surprisingly, it tends to be dark black. Black mold, also known as *Stachybotrys chartarum* or *Stachybotrys atra*, can be found indoors growing on a variety of surfaces, especially things with a high cellulose content like wood, fiberboard, gypsum board, paper, lint and dust. Other than being black, what does black mold look like? Black mold can actually be a greenish or grayish black. It has a distinctive odor that’s musty and mildew-like.

What is mold?

A mold is a type of fungus that grows in filaments and reproduces by forming mold spores that cannot be seen by the naked human eye. Mold can grow and thrive in any season, indoors or outdoors, in damp, warm and humid environments, and it spreads like wild fire. Mold itself flourishes in warm, moist environments, but mold spores can actually survive in harsh, dry environments. The spores float around in indoor and outdoor air. When the spores land on a moist surface, the mold can then start to grow. Black mold is most likely to rear its ugly head in areas of the home that are warm, humid and damp. In addition to showers, basements and crawlspaces that may have leaks, or some other sources of moisture, are commonly susceptible to the growth of toxic black mold. I want to note that according to the CDC, the term “toxic mold” is not accurate. However, it does admit that molds (like black mold) can produce toxins (specifically mycotoxins) that are toxic or poisonous. So maybe we should call it toxin-producing black mold.

Black Mold Symptoms...

There are several common black mold symptoms. Some of these symptoms of mold exposure include:

- Headaches
- Chronic fatigue
- Fever
- Eye irritation
- Sneezing
- Rashes
- Irritation to the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose and throat
- Chronic coughing

Black mold symptoms are even worse if the black mold exposure is severe, has lasted for a long time or if the individual has a mold allergy. Symptoms could include nausea, vomiting, as well as bleeding in the nose and lungs. Studies have also linked household mold exposure to depression. The extent of black mold symptoms depends upon the number of spores inhaled and the duration of exposure. Black mold easily causes mold allergy symptoms, and

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symptoms likely persist until you get rid of the the black mold. Sometimes people don't realize the health problems they're having are actually black mold symptoms. Black mold is not something to ignore because it only gets worse the longer you ignore it. If you're looking for a way to confirm that you have black mold poisoning, some laboratories offer testing for the presence of mycotoxins in the body. Labs use an immunology test called an Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) to test urine samples for aflatoxins, ochratoxin A and trichothecenes.

Black Mold Causes and Risk Factors...

Moisture combined with warmth in any environment is the major predecessor to black mold. Bathrooms, especially showers, are not the only prime locations for mold. The basement, especially if there is any water leakage, is another common area for black mold to flourish. Another place to watch out for black mold is your HVAC or air conditioning system, which is constantly recycling air. If there is moisture in the air, this can lead to moisture inside the system, which can then lead to mold growth. In addition to the mold actually growing within the inside of the system itself, now you have a system that's spewing out mold spores into your living space. This is why it's so important to have your system checked and cleaned regularly, or even replaced if the system already contains mold.

Conventional Treatment of Black Mold...

Typically, you can see or smell large black mold infestations. Smaller infestations can be harder to find. Wondering how black mold is conventionally treated? According to the CDC, "In most cases mold can be removed from hard surfaces by a thorough cleaning with commercial products, soap and water, or a bleach solution of no more than 1 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water. Absorbent or porous materials like ceiling tiles, drywall, and carpet may have to be thrown away if they become moldy. If you have an extensive amount of mold and you do not think you can manage the cleanup on your own, you may want to contact a professional who has experience in cleaning mold in buildings and homes. It is important to properly clean and dry the area as you can still have an allergic reaction to parts of the dead mold and mold contamination may recur if there is still a source of moisture." Are you wondering how to test for mold? One option is to hire a professional mold tester to collect and analyze mold samples. A cheaper option is to order a black mold test kit, which you can use to collect mold samples yourself. You then send the samples to a professional mold testing laboratory.

12 Natural Ways to Deal with Black Mold Symptoms...

If you already see or smell black mold, remove it immediately and thoroughly.

If you're experiencing black mold poisoning, there are thankfully some natural ways to help with your black mold symptoms, including:

1. Raw Garlic...

Raw garlic has amazing antifungal abilities, which is just what your body needs when it has been exposed to black mold. Garlic helps to kill off fungi, molds and yeasts. Two to four grams of fresh garlic per day, or 600 milligrams to 900 milligrams of garlic tablets daily, is recommended for toxic mold exposure.

2. Activated Charcoal...

Activated charcoal can be taken as a supplement for mold cleansing. Most people don't think about mold living in their bodies, but it can, and activated charcoal is a potent natural treatment. It traps toxins in the body, allowing them to be flushed out so the body doesn't reabsorb them. Activated charcoal is made from a variety of sources, but when used for natural healing, it's important to select activated charcoal made from coconut shells or other natural sources.

3. Chlorophyll...

It's so much more than a green pigment found in plants. I'm talking about chlorophyll, which has shown an ability to protect DNA from damage caused by toxic molds like aflatoxin.

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(Chlorophyll also has antibacterial and antifungal properties, making it a highly recommended part of any healthy diet, but especially one that is looking to fight black mold symptoms. Chlorophyll is in green vegetables, especially dark green leafy ones, so eat them regularly. Chlorella, spirulina and phytoplankton are three of the best sources of chlorophyll; they're available in a variety of supplement forms.

4. Cut Down or Cut Out Sugar...

If you're suffering from mold toxicity, sugar is definitely not your friend. Fungi, which include molds and yeasts, require the presence of sugar for survival. Eliminate, or significantly cut down, your sugar intake to help to get rid of any black mold symptoms.

When it comes to black mold in your home, these are some of the best natural ways to deal with black mold:

5. Identify the Moisture Source...

The absolute key to dealing with black mold anywhere is to identify what's creating the warm, damp environment in which the black mold can flourish. If you clean up black mold but don't address the source of the moisture, then the black mold is highly likely to return. No natural or conventional treatment will prevent or remove mold permanently unless you remove mold's necessary ingredient, which is moisture.

6. Fix the Source...

You need to completely fix any water leaks, enable better ventilation where humidity is high and/or address any HVAC system problems. You can also purchase a dehumidifier for any areas that tend to be too humid. Exhaust fans are in kitchens and bathrooms for good reason. Make sure you use them to get moisture out of these prime mold areas.

7. Throw Away Mold-Ridden Items...

Discard any items that are porous or if you are unable to completely remove the mold from them. It's also a very smart idea to get rid of any carpets that have been flooded because they're very prone to mold. Never paint or caulk over moldy surfaces.

8. Tea Tree Oil...

Bleach will definitely work to effectively kill black mold. However, it's ideal not to turn to bleach since bleach comes with so many concerning health side effects, including irritation to the eyes, mouth, lungs and skin. If you have asthma or another breathing problem, then the use of bleach is even more health-hazardous. Bleach can also burn human tissue, both internally and externally, especially in small children. Tea tree oil is one of several natural mold killers that you can employ instead of bleach. To put tea tree oil's natural fungicide power to work, combine two teaspoons of tea tree oil with two cups water in a spray bottle and shake well. Spray the mixture anywhere that you see black mold. Then just let it sit and reapply as needed. Tea tree oil is said to be one of the best natural mold killers. Pine oil can also be used in a similar fashion.

9. Baking Soda...

Baking soda is another great natural anti-mold substance. Mix a teaspoon of baking soda with two cups of water in a spray bottle. Make sure to shake the mixture well. Next, spray the moldy areas and use a scrubbing brush to scrub the black mold away. Rinse the area and spray it again with the baking soda solution. This time just let it dry.

10. Vinegar...

Put undiluted white distilled vinegar into a spray bottle and spray the vinegar directly on the moldy area(s). Let it set without any rinsing or scrubbing. This is a smelly natural mold remedy, but it's said to be highly effective and the vinegar scent will fade.

11. Grapefruit Seed Extract...

If you just can't handle the smell of vinegar (even short term), then there is another option that is odorless. I'm talking about grapefruit seed extract, which is an excellent antifungal both internally and externally. To use it on a moldy area in your home, simply combine 20 drops of grapefruit seed extract with two cups of water in a spray bottle. Shake the mixture and spray it directly on the mold and do not rinse.

12. Hydrogen Peroxide...

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Hydrogen peroxide is another odorless option that can be used to kill black mold. Pour a 3 percent concentration hydrogen peroxide into a spray bottle and spray the moldy areas until they are saturated. Let the hydrogen peroxide sit for at least 10 minutes before scrubbing the area well. Wipe the area with hydrogen peroxide when you're done scrubbing. Natural remedies may not be as strong as bleach, and typically need to be repeated, but they are a much healthier route!

Black Mold Prevention...

The main way to prevent black mold infestation and black mold exposure is moisture control. If you have a water leak or flooding, address the source of the water to prevent mold growth. If you're having trouble in your bathroom and don't have an exhaust fan, then it's a good idea. You should also aim to keep humidity down in your home — ideally, not higher than 50 percent. If humidity is a problem where you live, then a dehumidifier can be helpful. This is especially important when the weather is humid outdoors. In warmer months, an air conditioner can help to keep the humidity down. Also, make sure to properly ventilate your home. It's especially important to have exhaust fans in your bathrooms and kitchen. Make sure not to carpet your bathroom(s) because this will only increase the trapping of moisture. You should also remove and replace any carpets in your home that have experienced flooding. Regularly cleaning your home, especially your bathroom and basement, with natural anti-mold products will help to keep black mold away, too.

Black Mold Precautions...

If you do opt to go the conventional route and use bleach to clean up black mold, never mix bleach with ammonia or any other household cleaning product. Doing so can cause extremely dangerous and even fatal fumes. Always wear protective gloves and eye wear when cleaning mold. Make sure you cover the skin of your arms as well as your hands. You should also wear a respirator or mask designed for work with mold spores. A N-95 respirator is available online or at some hardware stores. To increase ventilation, open windows to let fresh air inside. If you have an area of black mold that is more than 10 square feet, consult the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guide titled "Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings." This document also applies to other building types. If you have any health concerns or are currently taking any medication, check with your doctor before using any internal natural remedies for black mold symptoms. If you're looking for a doctor who has experience in diagnosing and treating mold and mycotoxin-related illnesses, you can check out the American Academy of Environmental Medicine.

Final Thoughts on Black Mold Symptoms...

Toxin-producing black mold can cause serious black mold symptoms in adults and children. It can also cause extensive damage to your home as well as your health. I hope this article helps you to better understand how to identify, prevent and completely eliminate black mold from your life in every way. Remember that the No. 1 key to black mold prevention is moisture control. Dr. Josh Axe