

House to HOME

A Guide to Real Estate, Homes & Gardens

Mold
can be anywhere
are you in danger?

HEALTH



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Transactions from Allegheny, Butler, Armstrong and Westmoreland Counties.



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The same types of mold that shut down the UMPC transplant program *could be in your home*

By Dan Howard
for TRIB TOTAL MEDIA

The suspension of one of the nation's renowned organ transplant program is very big news, but really.... another important story here is that mold exposure can happen in the homes, automobiles, workplaces and many other areas frequented by these and other immunosuppressed patients. Patient's home environments need checked for mold before a transplant patient is sent home.

As one of the nation's leading transplant programs, the PA and Federal Departments of Health and the CDC are involved in exploring and solving the UPMC transplant patient mold problem. This is an important issue because the very lives of many patients awaiting organ transplants are now hanging in the balance while the mold deaths are being examined.

The transplant centers like UPMC have trained professionals to monitor mold conditions and recognize the health problems mold creates when they arise. If they can miss the problem, what is a homeowner to do without that level of expertise?

The longer an immunosuppressed person is in any place with mold, the higher the chance for a serious mold related health problem to occur. Most transplant patients spend far more time in their homes than in a hospital. The risk of serious problems arising

increases with the longer the time of exposure no matter where that exposure exits.

Make no bones about it. Transplant surgery is a true miracle of modern medicine for the recipients and their loved ones. It was as recent as in 1967 that the very first successful heart, kidney, and combination liver and pancreas transplants were performed. But that miracle can easily fade away with a contaminated hospital or home environment.

The background here is that organ transplant recipients are placed on immunosuppressant drugs. This simply means that their immune system needs to be "turned on to low" to avoid the body rejecting the organs. The good news is that with anti-rejection therapy, transplant patients can now live for decades as compared to the original outcome of many living only days after the transplant.



The Mold Health Risk Affects More Than Organ Transplant Patients

According to the Minnesota Department of Health, many other people in addition to organ transplant recipients can be affected by mold growth. These include:

- Infants and children
- Asthmatics
- Elderly people
- Individuals with respiratory conditions or sensitivities such as allergies or asthma
- Persons having severely weakened immune systems (for example, people with HIV infection, chemotherapy patients,)
- Persons with neurological or immunosuppression diseases such as Lupus or MS

The news stories indicate that the UPMC mold problem has existed for quite some time, exposing many patients to the deadly risks. The right person to observe and test for this problem was not involved. A program needs put in place to remedy this problem.

There are times that the right person, in the right place, at the right time can make a world of difference. One of those times for this author was at a \$400,000+ new construction home. It was freshly painted and looked wonderful.... except... there was the odor of mold when stepping into this beautiful home. The buyers mentioned that they were looking for a new house for health reasons. The husband was a double organ recipient. This was not the first nor the last home that this environmental professional has found to have high mold conditions.

Upon walking down the steps, though the foundation walls were freshly painted, there was the faint shade of green mold on the joists and sheathing. The buyers had not noticed the green tint. The mold

appeared to be Aspergillus. Among the tons of information poured into this very geeky skull from taking classes and reading countless studies and journals was the fact that Aspergillus is one of the serious, life threatening exposures for organ transplant patients.

We took the air and swab tests and confirmed that the mold was Aspergillus at an extremely high level for even healthy persons. Making things worse, the mold had spread to the upper levels of the home. Had they moved into the home... well... it would have been unhealthy at best and potentially life threatening at the worst. No house is worth that risk.

The amazing fact is that most organ transplant patients, and other immunosuppressed patients do not have their homes checked for mold and other contaminants that could be deadly.

It is time for that to change.

Go to www.EnviroSpect.info/OrganTransplant for more information and important consumer and technical links to additional references and sources. For a consumer friendly video on this subject, go to: https://youtube/vryM_a67de0

Dan Howard is the owner of EnviroSpect. For environmental consultation call 724-443-6653. For more information visit their website at www.EnviroSpect.com Email questions to: Dan@EnviroSpect.com. Facebook or connect @DanHoward251.



Risks for Mold in Your Home

- Roof leaks
- Plumbing leaks
- Leaking basement
- Finished basements
- Exposed soil in basements or crawl spaces
- Energy Star rated homes
- Interior french drains
- High humidity homes
- Oversized air conditioners
- Basements full of contents that can grow mold
- Under ventilated attics



More Contaminates than Mold can Affect Home Health

All of the at high risk patient groups mentioned above can be affected by indoor contaminants. These include formaldehyde, chemicals used in hobbies, pesticides, previous drug activity, lead, radon and asbestos.

Keeping A Home Healthy When You Have "at Risk" Patients



- Test a home before bringing an immunosuppressed person into a home
- Test new homes before purchasing
- Immediately address any type of water leak
- Dry out any water leak as soon as possible
- Monitor humidity in the home
- Properly ventilate attics
- Have HVAC equipment properly sized and installed
- Add air to air exchangers in tight homes
- Upgrade to sealed interior french drain systems
- Provide weep holes for brick buildings
- Keep roof and surface water away for the home