**Mold Resources**

**By Lara Vesta**

**Updated 2022**

If you are living in a water damaged home and experiencing mysterious/debilitating chronic health issues, I strongly urge you to test your home for mold and test yourself for the possibility of mold illness.

My story in brief: I had some health issues related to an undetected bacterial infection but had healed with antibiotic treatment when I moved into a water damaged home in 2014. My health immediately took a turn, the first specific symptom being PEM, post-exertional malaise, where any output of energy (teaching a class—I was a university professor—staying up late, arguing with my spouse) would cause me to be exhausted and shaking for days after, and would resolve only with rest. We lived in the house for three years, in the last year we had a shower leak that caused more mold, this time stachybotrys chartarum, and the remediation was not contained. I ended up having to quit my job, was homebound and bedridden until we followed the following protocol and moved.

Out of the mold, detoxing, I actually recovered to a high level of function. I currently live in a safe house and my health here has been pretty good, with occasional setbacks from viruses (covid), viral reactivation caused by viruses (Epstein Barr/Mono) and other pathogens/toxins (an allergic vaccine reaction, mold exposure at work, wildfire smoke). Mold exposure and water damaged buildings make me very sick! If I had stayed in a moldy home I would likely be dead by now.

**I’m creating this resource because someone gave me this information and it saved my life.**

**If only I had received it earlier, I could have prevented becoming so incredibly sick.**

**First Steps: determine your susceptibility to mold and mold toxins, test your living space.**

**Please note—most doctors do not believe that mold toxicity can make you sick. Finding a physician who is willing to order/run tests for you is key to this first part. If your primary care physician is unwilling, this guide might help you locate a mold specialist in your area:**[**https://www.survivingtoxicmold.com/mold\_doctors\_\_\_practitioners**](https://www.survivingtoxicmold.com/mold_doctors___practitioners)

**Mold is bad for everyone but this illness can be devastating for a portion of the population who has a genetic predisposition to it.**

Like about 25% of the population I have an HLA-DR gene that makes it so my body can't process mold toxins, or other biotoxins, so they bioaccumulate and cause a total breakdown of my immune/nervous systems.

You can be tested for the HLA-DR gene by Labcorp, which can be ordered by any doctor, and [survivingtoxicmold.com](http://survivingtoxicmold.com) has lots of resources for how to read the gene, it has a lot of variants and if you have it that can further complicate your experience and might indicate your child has it, too.  Even if you don't have it, toxic means toxic and you have to take that very seriously, I've learned, or you may have longstanding disabilities and potentially life-threatening illness.

The one thing that has made my health possible is moving into a mold-safe environment.  I tested my former home and current home with this test from Envirobiomics: <https://www.envirobiomics.com/product/hertsmi-2/>

My former home came up dangerous for people with mold illness, or CIRS—Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome.  I was very sick there.  My current home came up safe.  Once I moved and detoxed I rapidly improved. I also had to treat the viruses that has proliferated while my immune system was suppressed by the mold toxins, more on this in a moment.

I have known many people now in a similar situation, with totally debilitating health issues who discover that

**When you discover your home is unsafe:**

The first step, and I know this is NOT what you want to hear, is to get out of your house and into a safe, mold free environment.

Test your home and any home you might go to, even temporarily.  It is worth the investment.  You cannot see mold, or even water damage.  It can be hidden completely.  **And remediation from toxic mold is almost never possible.**  [survivingtoxicmold.com](http://survivingtoxicmold.com) has lots of information about testing your house and why remediation doesn't work. Many people—including some close friends—have tried to save their home and remediate, but it is costly, ineffective and ultimately they had to move to a safe house anyway.

If your home has toxic mold and you are ready to detox and move you also have to get rid of all your possessions. Mycotoxins/mold toxins are tiny and infiltrate every permeable surface—wood, cloth, paper. I had to get rid of all of my furniture, rugs, books (which was just heartbreaking), everything in order to heal.

Which I know is also what you don't want to hear.  But there is no other way, all of your belongings have mycotoxins in them.  I was cautioned by my naturopath, Dr. Anne Hill here in Portland, who works with mold patients.  Everything that is not metal, ceramic or thin enough to wash in a washing machine with borax needs to be thrown out.

We did keep photos, some of our children's things and important papers in a storage unit.  There is some evidence that in five years or more the levels of mycotoxins may decrease enough to re-introduce these to our home.  Everything else had to go.

The way I had to think of it was this:  if my home were saturated with toxic chemicals like pesticides, or heavy metals, or chlorine, would I stay in it?  Would I keep my children in it?  Would I keep belongings that were saturated with toxic chemicals?  Of course not.  Mold, because it is "natural" may seem benign, but for me it is hazardous.

When I left my moldy house to detox I had a car full of "clean" new toiletries and belongings.  I threw away my purse, boots and washed everything I had on when I reached my safe house, and I took a shower.  That was the start of my detox.

**The only way to heal is to find safe housing and start a detox protocol.**

This protocol is still part of my daily life. Even though I have healed, I still have some mold exposure (I live in the PNW) and my body still can’t “see” the toxins to get rid of them. My doctor said I will need to do this for the rest of my life.

**Detox protocol**: Daily saunas (I find dry saunas work best) or hot epsom salt baths to sweat, plus internal binders like chlorella and zeolite, all help get the mycotoxins out.  Survivingtoxicmold.com has these resources as well, but I do recommend finding a physician or naturopath to support you through the detox process. It can be tricky—detox too fast and you can feel much worse. This happened to me.

**Also, as you detox check for viruses, bacteria and other pathogens.**

I have a dual diagnosis of CIRS and Myalgic Encephalomeylitis, meaning that while my immune system was depressed by mold viruses were able to proliferate in my body.  I was tested for Epstein Barr, Varicella (chicken pox), Cytomegalovirus (CMV), other herpes family viruses and had evidence of subclinical reactivation for them all. I also had my C4a protein level tested, which was very high as well—this tends to be high in those with CIRS and those with ME/CFS—it is a very mold specific protein.

I was prescribed Low Dose Naltrexone by the Stanford Chronic Fatigue Clinic and after building up to the recommended dose of 4.5 mg combined it with Lauricidin (an over the counter potent form of monolaurin) to lower inflammation and treat viruses.

Also helpful:

 [moldymovie.com](http://moldymovie.com) (my husband and family watched this and it helped them understand what was going on with me)

[Through the Shadowlands](https://www.amazon.com/Through-Shadowlands-Science-Writers-Understand/dp/1623367654/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=12TAURE5KHLAZ&keywords=shadowlands+mold+book&qid=1656356960&sprefix=shadowlands+mold+book%2Caps%2C161&sr=8-1) (book) **A Science Writer's Odyssey into an Illness Science Doesn't Understand by Julie Rehmeyer**

**Supplements I also take:**

**Maca (adaptogenic) which really helps with the hormonal imbalances mold/viruses can cause.**

**Probiotics—mold has absolutely destroyed my microbiome, so rebuilding it has been very helpful**

**Pro-Boost Thymic Protein A—helpful immune stimulant**

**D-Ribose—a sugar supporting energy**

**Quercetin—anti-inflammatory**

If you have mold illness, I am so sorry.

You will question if this is real.

Any questions I've had about whether my mold experience was "real" have been answered in full.  I was sick for years.  When out of the mold, I healed.

Wishing love and healing to you—Lara

\*\*Disclaimer: please note this information is based on my personal experience and does not constitute medical advice.

If you would like to connect and learn more about illness as a rite of passage and making meaning out of difficult experiences, I offer the following.

The Wild Soul School: nonlinear, inquiry-based education for exploration. The 13 Day Ritual Practice is free, and the ongoing Dark Goddess Project is specific to rites of passage initiations. <https://wildsoulschool.teachable.com>

Patreon Community: if this work is useful to you please consider joining our support community. <https://www.patreon.com/laraveledavesta>

The Moon Divas Guidebook: Spirited Self-Care for Women in Transition has lots of resources for navigating challenging life transformations. <https://www.laravesta.co/moon-divas-guidebook>