

# Hudson Valley Functional Medicine Information Sheet

## MOLD INFORMATION: MOLD CAN HURT YOU

Chronic and recurrent sinusitis, headache, cognitive and attention problems, anxiety, tremors, fatigue, chronic cough, inflammation in the nose and brain.....



These are some of the symptoms attributable to chronic mold exposure. Mold can cause human health conditions via several pathways. The most well known is direct irritation of sinuses, and mold is now known to be the UNDERLYING cause of almost all chronic sinusitis. This was published by the Mayo clinic in 1999 in two journals, the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* and the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, as well as a Mayo Clinic press release. Yet most patients continue to receive nasal sprays, steroids, and antibiotics, which may or may not relieve symptoms short term but don't eradicate the root cause. The antibiotics change the natural "terrain" of the body and leave us MORE susceptible to fungi. One in five people in the US suffers from chronic or recurrent sinus inflammation.

In the last decade there has been increasing recognition that molds also cause health problems through two other mechanisms. Mycotoxins are chemicals produced by molds, some of which are so toxic that they have been researched for biological warfare by the military (trichothecene "T2"). They are absorbed through the skin, lungs, sinuses, and digestive tract, and may be the root cause of various behavioral/emotional and cognitive disorders. The science is very new and there are a lot of controversies and unanswered questions, but there is enough published science to know that we need to be concerned about the effects of these toxins on our brains. Here at HVFM, we have treated several dozen patients where mycotoxins have disrupted normal function.

Lastly, molds also produce toxic vapors, in the form of VOCs (volatile organic compounds) which can produce a chemical toxicity in susceptible individuals.

You cannot assume your indoor environment is clear of mold spores and mold toxins just by casual visual inspection, although that is always a good start. We can refer you to reputable mold inspection and *separate* mold remediation services if we feel your health problems warrant this type of investigation. We work with several labs that can test for different aspects of mold-related illness and can refer you to books and websites with more information. Conventional medicine for the most part has not addressed or thought about environmental mold as a human health issue, and based on the timeline with pesticides, cigarette smoke, and genetically modified foods, it may be a decade or two until this issue is taken seriously.