

Stop Testing for Mold! *(It is a waste of money)*

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I wrote this article in response to the great number of clients who call me each year and ask if I test for mold. I do not.



Yes, I look for signs of mold, and more importantly, I look for the moisture that causes it but I do not, nor do I recommend that anyone do mold testing.

Mold in the home is not good. Inhaling mold spores can cause various allergic reactions and can make some people ill. However, testing for mold is a waste of your money. No credible medical authority recommends testing for mold as a normal course of action even if you know you have mold issues. Mold testing companies have proliferated like rabbits because of sensational and misinformed news stories that have no medical basis.

From the (CDC) Center for Disease Control and Prevention (bolds are my own):

Generally, it is not necessary to identify the species of mold growing in a residence, and CDC does not recommend routine sampling for molds. Current evidence indicates that allergies are the type of diseases most often associated with molds. Since the susceptibility of individuals can vary greatly either because of the amount or type of mold, **sampling and culturing are not reliable in determining your health risk.** If you are susceptible to mold and mold is seen or smelled, there is a potential health risk; therefore, no matter what type of mold is present, you should arrange for its removal. Furthermore, **reliable sampling for mold can be expensive, and standards for judging what is and what is not an acceptable or tolerable quantity of mold have not been established.**

From a published (AAAAI) position statement by the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology concerning breathing mold/mycotoxins (bolds are my own):

...Thus we agree with the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine evidence-based statement and the Institute of Medicine draft, which conclude that the **evidence does not support the contention that mycotoxin-mediated disease (mycotoxicosis) occurs through inhalation...** Furthermore, the contention **that the presence of mycotoxins would give rise to a whole panoply of nonspecific complaints is not consistent with what is known to occur;** ... Conclusions: **"The occurrence of mold-related toxicity (mycotoxicosis) from exposure to inhaled mycotoxins in nonoccupational settings is not supported by the current data, and its occurrence is improbable."**



The Minnesota Department of Health has published an excellent source of information on mold and mold testing. The entire article can be found in the references below. They go as far as to list seven reasons why it is a poor idea to test for mold.

1. *Poor reason for testing, "To find out if there is mold."*
2. *Poor reason for testing, "To identify what type of mold is present."*
3. *Poor reason for testing, "To learn if the mold is the toxic kind."*
4. *Poor reason for testing, "To find the cause of health complaints".*
5. *Poor reason for testing, "To determine if the environment is safe"*
6. *Poor reason for testing, "To decide how to correct a mold problem"*
7. *Poor reason for testing, "To make a party respond to the problem"*

Summary: Do not test for mold. If you can smell it or you can see it then take the necessary steps to correct the moisture that is causing the mold. Remember, moisture is the problem not the mold. Find out what is causing the moisture (this is what your home inspector should be doing). Fix the moisture problem. Clean up the mold. It is that simple. Stop testing for mold!

References:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/indoorenv/mold.html#4>

American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology

<http://www.aaaai.org/Aaaai/media/MediaLibrary/PDF%20Documents/Practice%20and%20Parameters/Mold-2006.pdf>

Minnesota Department of Health

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/mold/moldtest.html>

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