

MOLD - Get the Facts!

Michael B. Leban, PE, Leban Engineering & Home Inspection
770-321-9689

Mold is the latest “hot” real estate issue. Headlines scream of the dangers of “Toxic” mold and the potential health issues it presents. Is the mold issue the result of scientific studies or a by product of over zealous marketing by laboratories, cleanup contractors, lawyers and inspectors more interested in increasing their profit margins than your health and well being? Let’s take a look at some facts which should shed light on this issue and help you and your clients make informed decisions.

Fact - There is no scientific evidence that supports adverse human health affects to the general public from indoor molds. The American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) published its Evidence-based Statement entitled “Adverse Human Health Effects Associated with Molds in the Indoor Environment” in October 2002. The statement concluded that “Current scientific evidence does not support the proposition that human health has been adversely affected by inhaled mycotoxins (toxic mold) in home, school or office environments.”

Fact - CDC states that allergies are the type of diseases often associated with molds. Medical and health professionals agree that the link between mold and unique or rare health conditions has not been proven. Mold exposure does not always present a health problem indoors, however, some people are sensitive to molds.

Fact - The EPA, CDC & AIHA do not recommend sampling for mold. It is not necessary to determine the type of mold you may have, as the agencies advise homeowners to remove & clean all mold without expensive testing. EPA in it's “*Mold, Moisture, and Your Home*” recommends that for areas less than 10 square feet, the cleanup can likely be performed by the homeowner.

Fact - There have been no Federal limits set for mold or mold spores. Standards for judging what is an acceptable level, tolerable, or normal quantity of mold have not been established. As a result, mold testing can not be reliably used to predict health risks.

Fact - CDC recommends a common sense approach to address mold contamination inside buildings and homes. For the most part, one should take routine measures to prevent mold growth in the home. In fact, CDC writes that they do not believe that one needs to take any different precautions with *Stachybotrys chartarum* than with other molds. The American Industrial Hygienists Association's (AIHA) position is that airborne mycotoxins have not been shown to cause health problems for occupants in residential or commercial buildings.

Fact - Inspectors & laboratories appear to be more interested in their profit than your health and safety. Laboratories & mold inspectors advertise the dangers of toxic mold, even going so far as to suggest mold is responsible for chronic illness, cancer and even death. Marketing to home inspectors invariably includes phrases such as “increase your profits” and “avoid liability”.

In summary, there is no scientific evidence that supports the current over reaction to mold. In no way am I suggesting that mold be ignored or minimized, just that we understand the facts and make decisions based on good information instead of marketing hype or profit driven motives.

Michael B. Leban, PE is president of Leban Engineering & Home Inspection in Marietta. Additional information can be found at www.Leban.com. Michael is available on request for presentations on mold, structural engineering and other home inspection issues. He can be reached at 770-321-9689, PO Box 680966, Marietta, GA 30068, or Michael@Leban.com.

MOLD - Get the Facts!

Michael B. Leban, PE, Leban Engineering & Home Inspection
770-321-9689

Resources

EPA - <http://epa.gov/iaq/molds>, *Mold, Moisture, and Your Home*

CDC - <http://www.cdc.gov>

American College of Occupational & Environmental Medicine -
<http://www.acoem.com/guidelines>, then search for mold.

American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) - <http://www.acgih.org>

American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) - <http://www.aiha.org>, *The Facts About Mold*