

Guide to Resources that Helped Me Identify, Advocate for My Health, Treat and Heal from Mould-Related Illness and Symptoms, by Daina Delette

This guide is to help you or anyone you know who may be going through an unidentified illness with similar symptoms, to empower you with the language and tools necessary to get to the root of the symptoms, and set you on a path towards finding answers and recovering. The information I'm sharing in this guide is not meant to replace medical advice, diagnose, or treat any medical issues. This is simply my personal story and culminated research that helped solve my health mysteries, and ultimately led to my recovery.

Science-based Background

The first thing to be aware of is that mould/mold (byproduct [mycotoxin](#)) affects only 25% of people in the same home, with the same exposure, due to a physiological inability to form antibodies against mould. The body systems that can be affected vary greatly, as well as length of exposure time that can influence a vast array of [symptoms](#). These factors add challenges for scientific studies. Fortunately, mould-related illness (aka sick building syndrome) has been gaining attention resulting in credible studies over the past decades due to its very real and devastating health impacts. [1]

An interesting correlation is that roughly 20% of humans (and over 100 other species), is born with the [Highly Sensitive Person](#) (HSP) trait, a sensory processing sensitivity (SPS) equally inherent in males and females, associated with greater sensitivity and responsiveness to the environment and to social stimuli. [17]

Contrary to its name, "sensitive" is less about emotions, and more in relation to physical experiences, like a highly tuned antenna or sponge. This can leave HSPs more physically susceptible to environmental hazards such as mould, or mycotoxins, which may help to further explain the percentage of those affected within the same household.

Here is another correlation: mold toxicity causes thyroid dysfunction, including symptoms of hypothyroidism that go undetected in basic lab work as "subclinical", but shows up positive if thyroid antibodies are tested. Thyroid antibodies are indicative of autoimmune disease. Even subclinical cases of hypothyroidism cause menstrual disorders in 20% of patients, and resolve once the root of the thyroid disorder is corrected. [2]

In my experience through 5 years of growing exposure, my endocrine system was affected first, followed by my circulatory and nervous systems.

That said, the physical manifestations of symptoms in males and females might be felt and look quite differently, with varying consequences. [3]

While this guide is meant to help anyone with exposure, or knows someone with unexplained health symptoms who may be exposed, I will focus primarily on my personal experiences and symptoms experienced as a female.

The second thing to be aware of, is that the presence of mould in the home can be hidden or obvious, a small or large amount, depending on where the water source is, how much and how long it's been leaking for. [13]

A Brief History

The source of my mould exposure was from a faulty refrigerator. It was installed without a drip pan, which is a necessary component to catch condensation from the compressor. The resulting damage was a continuous leak under the fridge that ran under the floorboards and walls, the diagnosis confirmed by a third party professional remediation inspector.

The symptoms were exacerbated following the pandemic lockdown in March 2020, when businesses shuttered and I began working from home. Shortly afterwards, months-long excavating and wood planning was taking place surrounding my home, causing me to also shutter the doors and windows against diesel fumes and noise until late fall, and resumed with the nice weather the following spring.

The peak symptoms occurred during the heat dome of summer 2021. Another professional remediation inspector informed me that the high temperatures were causing the mould spores to bloom, and walking on the floor was disrupting the invisible spores causing them to become airborne. The mould infected my body through several entrance points: my lungs, bare feet, and mucus membranes (eyes and mouth).

Chronological List of Symptoms

(Note this is a personal list, not a complete general list; see Scientific Journals under Studies for a more complete list of symptoms)

2016

- Moved in to cottage late October 2016

2017

- Spring and onward- began experiencing menstrual irregularities
- Unexplained fatigue
- Unexplained brain fog
- Anxiety
- Hair loss
- Heart palpitations
- Notably, my housemate of 3 months over summer experienced all these symptoms, as well as ongoing unexplained lung infections, abdominal

inflammation and joint pain (she lived there for 2 years prior to my taking over the lease)

2018

- All the above symptoms continued and worsened
- Unexplained weight gain begins
- Vast array of symptoms similar to hypothyroidism

2019

- Symptoms continued to worsen
- Summer and onward- onset of new fungal infections requiring medical treatment
- By fall- a general sense of low functioning interfering with work and life
- Late November- contracted coronavirus, severely ill for 3 weeks

2020

- Onset of “long covid” (would continue for 28 months, aka PASC)
- Symptoms of mould related illness overlap with long covid
- Continuous upper respiratory infection and cough (also lasting from December 2019 until March 2022)
- Mid-March pandemic lockdown
- April-May menstrual irregularities quickly worsened
- May- tested severe anemia and extreme pain due to prolonged [menorrhagia](#), aka hypermenorrhagia (diagnosed by Gynecologist)
- June- medically disabled (diagnosed by GP)
- Extreme fatigue and brain fog
- Brain disorders affecting normal functioning, limiting reading/learning/memory loss
- Heart palpitations increasing to alarming frequency
- Increased anxiety (body signaling not feeling safe)

2021

- All symptoms worsened to multiple disabilities
- Chest x-ray for continuous cough and upper respiratory infection
- EKG and Heart monitor for worsening heart palpitations
- Continuous hypermenorrhagia (from February for 7 months until mould finally discovered and remediated, relieving endocrine dysregulation)
- June- new onset symptoms affecting nervous system [7], including peripheral tingling and numbness beginning on right side then on left.
- At peak exposure end of June- painful burning sensation in feet beneath skin at night, accompanied by skin numbness (aka [neuropathy](#), which is an early onset symptom of autoimmune diseases)
- Hand and foot tremors for a few weeks escalating to uncontrollable foot spasms

- July “[Dutch Test](#)” confirms autoimmune reaction affecting thyroid and endocrine systems causing adrenal fatigue, hormone imbalance, thyroid antibodies (diagnosed by ND)
- August “[MycoTOX Profile](#)” confirms mould-related illness (diagnosed by Naturopathic Doctor, Dr. Hannah Webb)
- October confirmed born with HSP trait, illness symptoms consistent with mould-related illness (diagnosed by Psychiatrist, Dr. David Montalbetti)
- November confirmed [Central Sensitivity Syndrome](#) due to chronic mould exposure (diagnosed by Internal Medicine Specialist, Dr. Stephane Voyer)

Research

(Note this list is just meant to be a rough list, a launching pad of credible blog articles, scientific journal articles, and clinical research. Further digging through resources and bibliographies in these links may provide better resources to help you more specifically.)

Valuable Resource for Female Health (Knowledge is key in how to advocate for your health by learning what is normal, what is not, and how to ask for what your doctor may not know about...)

Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research <https://www.cemcor.ca/>

Mould Clinics & Info

1. <https://drummartinclinic.ie/mould-toxicity>

Mould and the Endocrine System (includes adrenals, thyroid, and sex hormones)

2. Endocrine Causes of Menorrhagia

<https://www.medscape.com/answers/255540-111952/what-are-the-endocrine-causes-of-menorrhagia>

3. Mould and Hormone Imbalance

<https://coem.com/blog/mold-and-hormonal-imbalance>

4. Hypothyroidism and Irregular Periods

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/hypothyroidism/irregular-periods/>

5. Thyroid and Indoor Air Microbes <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28824644/>

Mould and the Nervous System

6. Peripheral Neuropathy <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/peripheral-neuropathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20352061>

Mould and the Circulatory System (includes lungs, heart, uptake of nutrients in to bloodstream)

7. How indoor mould makes people sick; the only remedy is to heal the living environment.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/10/121012074655.htm>

Mould and the Brain

8. Neurologic and neuropsychiatric syndrome features of mold and mycotoxin exposure <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19854819>

9. <https://paradigmchange.me/psychiatric>

10. <https://www.amenclinics.com/blog/toxic-mold-syndrome-it-was-like-i-lost-my-personality>

Healing & Life After Mould

11. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMnI31ZXkqE>

12. <https://www.survivingmold.com>

Mould Remediation Info

13. [https://www.nccer.ca/sites/default/files/Mould Remediation Evidence Review March 2014.pdf](https://www.nccer.ca/sites/default/files/Mould%20Remediation%20Evidence%20Review%20March%202014.pdf)

14. <https://www.randrmagonline.com/articles/88419-mold-restorationdont-forget-the-mycotoxins>

Further Reading

15. [Mold and Mycotoxins: Current Evaluation and Treatment 2022](#), by Dr. Neil Nathan

16. [Toxic](#), by Dr. Neil Nathan

17. [The Highly Sensitive Person](#), by Elaine N. Aron (Audiobook version)

Protect and Yourself from Aversion, Prepare for Remediation Meetings, Advocate for Your Health, and Ask for What You Need (not everyone will believe you if it's in their best interest not to, and some may even try to convince you to distrust your body and your experience, in order to absolve themselves of responsibility, such as in a landlord-tenant situation)

18. [The Elegant Warrior](#): How to Win Life's Trials Without Losing Yourself, by Heather Hansen

19. [The Narcissist's Playbook](#): How to Identify, Disarm, and Protect Yourself from Narcissists, Sociopaths, Psychopaths, and Other Types of Manipulative and Abusive People (Audible version)

20. [Unbound: A Woman's Guide to Power](#), by Kasia Urbaniak (Audible version)

21. Books by Dr. Daniel Amen, psychiatrist and neurologist, founder of [Amen Clinics](#) specializing in brain health and recovery

22. [Estrogen Storm Season](#), by Dr. Jerilynn Prior, endocrinologist specializing in female sex hormone research, founder of [CEMCOR](#)

Tests & Treatment

(In addition to General Laboratory bloodwork and urinalysis at hospital for anemia, vitamins, minerals and thyroid monitoring)

Treatment Clinic

The Naturopathic Doctor who successfully treated me is Dr. Hannah Webb at Madrona Integrative Health on Salt Spring Island, BC

<https://madronaintegrativehealth.ca/>

Tests

1. Dutch Test (Dried Urine Test for Comprehensive Hormones): Sex Hormones and Metabolites, Adrenal Hormones (Cortisol, DHEA), Vitamin B12, B6, Glutathione, Dopamine, Norepinephrine, Melatonin, Oxidative Stress)
2. MycoTOX Test
3. Thyroid Function (TSH, T4 Free, T3 Free, Thyroperoxidase Antibodies, Thyroglobulin Antibodies, Thyroglobulin, Reverse T3)

Treatments (an incomplete list, focusing on most helpful treatments that worked for me, to talk with your Naturopathic Doctor about first)

- High quality HEPA filter air cleaner
- I also used an ozone generator to intermittently “shock” the air/surfaces 3x while cottage was vacant prior to cleaning surfaces and running HEPA air cleaner (this is very dangerous as ozone is poisonous- all life must be vacated during and at least 24hrs afterwards, including plants, followed by thoroughly airing out- carefully research process first!)
- Drank 2-3L water/day while detoxing
- [Adrenal Complex](#) supplement (Designs For Health brand prescribed by ND; [AOR](#) brand [Ortho Adapt](#) is a great quality alternative backed by science with similar formula)
- ND formulated Bitters Tincture
- ND formulated Adrenal Tincture
- Adrenal lifestyle strategies (morning sun, low stress, lots of rest, reduced blue light, regular bedtime, full nights’ sleep, gentle exercise, listen to body)
- [Thyroid Synergy](#) supplement (by Designs for Health, prescribed by ND, along with lifestyle strategies; alternative brand with similar formula is Lorna Vanderhaeghe [ThyroSmart](#))
- IV vitamin mineral + glutathione (administered weekly by ND for 5 weeks)
- Sauna and hydro cycle therapy (if possible)
- Time outdoors in nature (picnics on the ground, swimming if possible, walks or hikes or yoga outside, morning sun, grounding and energizing)
- [Wild Omega 3 EPA + DHA](#) (I used New Roots brand; EFAs for brain, nerve, gut health)
- Milkthistle (I used AOR [Liver Support](#))
- NAC for antioxidant liver detox support, a precursor for glutathione IV therapy (I used CanPrev [NAC+](#))
- [ACES + Zinc](#) (Cyto-Matrix brand prescribed by ND; vitamins/mineral to strengthen immune system)
- [D3 + K2](#) (I used CanPrev brand)
- [Active Green Tea](#) (AOR brand to help reduce oxidative damage)
- Iron for anemia (high dose as recommended by your GP, together with monitored bloodwork). The most easily absorbed brand is [Ferapro](#), formerly Bob’s Original Iron Formula. At peak anemia I was taking 150mg, 2x/day, and as it improved I was taking 75mg/day before and during menstruation, then every other day until no longer needed. Note that menstruating females need 18mg iron/day, while males need only 9mg iron/day. If you have dark circles under your eyes, pale skin, brain fog and muscle weakness, tell your GP you need bloodwork asap!
- [Curcumin Ultra](#) by AOR to reduce pain and inflammation
- [Quercetin](#), a natural antioxidant and bioflavonoid
- Resveratrol 500mg, a natural antioxidant and bioflavonoid ([PlantVital](#) brand or [Natural Factors](#) brand- for other brands look highest bioavailable potency)

- Foods as medicine that are anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, probiotics, bioflavonoids, high in fibre, colours of the rainbow
- Avoid fermented foods or foods that contain mould (do your research)
- [SAME 400mg](#) by AOR (a gentle HSP-safe alternative to ADD prescription medication, recommended by my psychiatrist to help restore cognitive function/neurotransmitter brain health recovery and focus after mould damage)
- Greens supplement: Progressive [Vege Greens](#) or Nova Scotia Organics [Nova Greens](#)
- Protein supplement: Genuine Health Organic [Vegan Proteins](#) (in conjunction with iron and oral-micronized progesterone therapy to restore menstrual health)
- Organika [Electrolytes](#) powder drink mix
- Smart Solutions Lorna Vanderhaeghe [Magsmart](#) powder
- Sandoz K 8 600mg Potassium supplement (behind pharmacy counter)
- As needed, first couple months to detox excess estrogen (if required): [EstroSmart](#) by Lorna Vanderhaeghe (carefully monitoring symptoms with ND to prevent estrogen deficiency side-effects such as hot/cold flushes)
- As needed, for a few months following estrogen detox to support and maintain healthy hormone levels, menstruation, and reduce menorrhagia: [MenoSmart](#) by Lorna Vanderhaeghe or Nova Scotia Organics [Mena & Meno Formula](#)
- Cellular regeneration molecules Lipo NMN and NAD by [Renew by Science](#)

My Supplement Schedule and Tips during first 6 months of Mould Treatment
(eliminating certain supplements as health improves, making notes and adjustments for what feels right and what doesn't)

AM: Upon waking on empty stomach

- SAME 400mg (As recommended by my Dr., I began with 1/AM, then 2/AM plus 1/Noon)

AM: Before breakfast

- Bitters Tincture (ND Formulated)

AM: With breakfast

- ThyroSmart, MenoSmart
- NMN + NAD
- Quercetin
- Resveratrol
- Curcumin
- Wild Omega 3s
- Liver Support/Milkthistle

AM: Mid-morning snack (this stack is synergistic, meaning they work better together)

- Iron Formula
- Potassium
- ACES + Zinc

Late AM/early PM (on empty stomach)

- SAME

PM: Before lunch

- Bitters Tincture (ND Formulated)

PM: With lunch

- OrthoAdapt
- Adrenal Tincture (ND Formulated)
- Liver Support/Milkthistle
- Active Green Tea
- D3 + K2

PM: Mid-afternoon

In a mason jar, fill $\frac{1}{4}$ jar with apple cider juice and $\frac{3}{4}$ with water. Add 1 scoop Greens powder plus 1 scoop Protein powder. Secure lid and shake vigorously until blended. Drink quickly.

I've tried many types of these powders and found these to be the best formulas, nicest tasting and easily dissolves without chunks.

The combo helps boost the body with much needed nutrition. Mould mycotoxins can negatively impact the circulatory and digestive systems causing nutrient deficiency. In females, because mycotoxins harmfully strain menstruation, stressing hemoglobin and iron stores, the body needs extra protein to support production. Without the combination of iron, protein and progesterone supplementation, symptoms of hair loss, extreme fatigue, and muscle atrophy may be experienced.

PM: Before dinner

- Bitters Tincture (ND Formulated)

PM: With dinner

- Liver Support/Milkthistle
- Wild Omega 3s
- Iron Formula (if required)
- ACES + Zinc

PM: 1 hour before bedtime

- MenoSmart
- Oral Micronized Progesterone (compounded through compounding pharmacy is most economical, as prescribed by my Dr. to treat menorrhagia; read Estrogen Storm Season client profile symptom patterns to determine if

you should talk to your doctor about this- it was the best advice as a female I ever received! Also research Cemcor website.)

As needed during menstruation

- Electrolytes drink mix
- Increased Iron Formula (if required)
- Drink extra water!

When muscle/nerve twitching is experienced

- MagSmart drink mix

My Current Reduced Supplement Schedule at 9 months in to recovery (feeling great, mentally and physically!)

AM: Upon waking on empty stomach

- SAME 400mg x2

AM: With breakfast

- ThyroSmart, MenoSmart
- Wild Omega 3s

AM: Mid-morning snack

- ACES + Zinc

Late AM (on empty stomach)

- SAME x1

PM: With lunch

- OrthoAdapt

PM: Mid-afternoon

- Greens + Proteins with apple juice and water, when I need a boost
- Iron Formula, days leading up to menstruation, and during

PM: 1 hour before bedtime

- MenoSmart
- Oral Micronized Progesterone

Other info referred through a GoFundMe donor

Nova Scotia

Integrated Chronic Care Service (ICCS), a branch of Capital Health

<https://www.nshealth.ca/content/integrated-chronic-care-service-iccs>

“...the only free service of its kind in North America that is free. All you need is a referral from your doctor. They accept patients from all over Canada and is a great support system as they have access to many resources. The founder was one of the doctors that fell incredibly ill at Camp Hill. He travelled everywhere trying to get help and finally found help in Dallas, Texas. He retired a few years ago. His son Dr. Fox is now there.”

NDs in Montreal
Melanie Kusznireckyj, ND
Juliana Rosario Yeung, ND

Isabella Wentz (pharmacist specializing in thyroid)
<https://thyroidpharmacist.com>

I hope this resource has been helpful. Make sure you talk with your health care providers and do your research before implementing with any of this info I shared, to prevent any adverse reactions or over supplementing. Remember, this info and recovery strategy was very specific to my health and body, and may be contraindicated in others. Take what resonates, leave the rest.

I wish you and your loved ones success and peace in your health journey!

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1