

## GENERAL

# Family forced out of Sharjah home after fungus invasion

Egyptian pharmacist living in hotel with wife and children after mould destroys everything

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By [Mazhar Farooqui, Deputy Editor](#)

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**Dr Nasser returned from a one-month vacation to find disgusting black mould all over the ceiling, walls, electronics, furniture and mattresses in his apartment.**

Image Credit: Supplied Photos

SHARJAH A potentially dangerous form of fungus has forced an Egyptian family out of their home in Sharjah.

Dr Nasser, 42, has been living in a Dh400-per-night hotel with his wife and three daughters since September 4, the day he returned from holiday to discover the havoc wreaked by the mould in his two-bedroom Al Majaz apartment.

“Everything is destroyed. My 40-inch LCD TV, my expensive sofa, our bedroom sets, washing machine and all our clothes. I am still counting my losses,” said Dr Nasser.

“I was looking forward to relaxing after an exhausting one month vacation, but when I opened the apartment door I was shell shocked. Everything was covered in black mould. I am a pharmacist by profession and know the health risk mould exposure poses, especially to kids. I asked them to stay back while I stepped inside to inspect the extent of the damage. It was far worse than I had imagined. We immediately decided to move to a nearby hotel.”

The World Health Organisation recently published a report on toxic mould, known as mycotoxins, that notes significant health issues. It warned that “exposure to mycotoxins can produce both acute and chronic toxicities ranging from death to deleterious effects on the central nervous, cardiovascular and pulmonary systems.”

“I can’t take that risk. The real estate management are getting the apartment cleaned, but I know it’s easier said than done. I don’t want to live there any anymore. I have asked them to relocate us in another flat in the same building but they are not willing to listen or reason. “The mould was caused because they rushed a paint job. They applied another coat of paint without allowing the first coat to dry. The moisture left in the walls and ceilings created the perfect environment for fungus to grow and form colonies,” said Dr Nasser, who’s threatening to file a case against the real estate company for damages.

“Several thousand dirhams worth of furniture and electronic goods have been damaged. We have been living in a hotel for 10 days and because there is no kitchen, we have to order food from outside. All this costs money.”

The real estate firm however refused to compensate the losses. “According to our rent contract, it’s the tenant’s responsibility to look after their apartments. We are getting the apartment cleaned but we cannot pay for the tenant’s hotel bills or compensate for his loss,” said a manager.

The 20-storey building was built just four years back.

– Name changed to protect identity

## WHAT is MOuLD

Mould is an organism, a fungus that thrives in warm, humid conditions. Once established in a building, it spreads quickly, attacking furniture, ceiling and carpets. The washing machine is its favourite target. Mould creates tiny spores to reproduce just as plants produce seeds. Once air-borne, it is very difficult to filter out. Some mould can even produce toxins.



Dr Nasser returned from a one-month vacation to find disgusting black mould all over the ceiling, walls, electronics, furniture and mattresses in his apartment.

Image Credit: Supplied photos

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