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I have had Chronic Bronchial Asthma since the age of nine. Until seven years ago my asthma triggers included pollen, dust, many foods, animal fur, smoke, wet paint, volatile chemical fumes, cold air and inhaled powders. I am now sixty-three years old, and to the best of my knowledge, until my massive exposure to a mold filled environment seven years ago I did not have any reaction to mold, either allergic, asthmatic, or toxic.

Seven years ago I started a new job in a building that had been abandoned, and unused, for at least fifty years. The building was in a waterside shipyard that had closed after the Korean War. During those fifty years, every window in the building had long since broken, allowing rain to enter the building. The abandoned shipyard had just been turned into a new "industrial park". My new employer was the first, and only, tenant. They occupied about ten percent of the building.

From almost my first day of employment I began feeling terribly sick. The symptoms included headache, dizziness, and lung problems that, at first, I assumed was asthma. By my second month of employment, I was literally losing my mind. I felt as if every molecule of my body was exploding. I had quadrupled my asthma medication, but could still not achieve full lung functioning. And the medication, albuterol, had done nothing to reduce the level of suffering from my non-lung symptoms. This proved to me that my suffering WAS MORE THAN JUST AN ALLERGIC/ASTHMATIC REACTION.

I asked my boss to let me look at the other ninety percent of the building, which was still unoccupied. What I found was, and still is, to this day, my nightmare. The entire building was covered, floor and walls, with dark blue-black shiny, slimey mold. I quit my job, immediately, and advised my boss that the symptoms he was suffering from, even though he was not an asthmatic, were caused by this mold. I am amazed that the New York City Buildings Department ever issued a certificate of occupancy for the building.

What makes this more complicated is that my immune system has now recognized, and become reactive to, mold, and I continue to have a reaction whenever I am newly exposed to mold. The only difference is that I am able to recognize the mold reaction much faster, every new time that it happens, and I am able to remove the mold from my environment or move myself into a different environment. (see following list)

This list contains instances of mold reactions I have experienced in the last seven years:

The toilet bowl in my apartment overflowed and flooded a large part of my linoleum-covered floor. After a few weeks my mold reaction began. The mold had grown between the linoleum and the wood floor underneath. During the removal and replacement of the linoleum I discovered a neat way of confirming that you are getting

rid of the source of the mold. Here's how. Help the linoleum installer rip up and dispose of the old linoleum. If your assistance makes you twice as sick as you were before, you've found the source of the mold.

Another time, the drain pipe for my bathroom sink broke and water flooded the vanity cabinet that the sink was in. The cabinet was made of particle-board, which turned out to be an excellent mold growing medium. Since this was my first mold experience after my mold-sensitizing job episode, it took me a long time to figure out the source of the mold and to figure out that the job experience had sensitized me to mold. No one else in my apartment was made sick, because they had not been sensitized by a previous mold exposure, as I had been. It took me so long to figure this out, that by the time the sink and vanity were replaced, I was getting non-stop nosebleeds that required my nose being cauterized to stop the bleeding.

Here's another mold problem that I have only found a partial solution to. I've had to buy a new air-conditioner for my bedroom, three years in a row, due to mold growing in them. Air conditioners don't seem to be made with water drain holes on their bottom anymore. The water lays in the air conditioner, until the mold starts growing. It takes about three months growth to instigate a mold reaction from me. Any suggestions on how to help my "disposable air-conditioner" problem would be appreciated.

Here's another mold problem that does not fall into the category of "sick buildings", but is a critical source of mold sickness that has been overlooked by everyone. It is mold in cars. I had been using my father's car. Due to the stress and concentration of our both being involved with the terminal illness of my mother, we had not gotten around to fixing a problem of rain water leaking into the car for two months. Carpeting on the floor of the car is a great mold growing medium. The water pools in the metal recessed floor wells of the car, and the floor carpeting and under-padding act as a wick, to soak up and retain the water for a week, following a one day rain. We both have a poor sense of smell and didn't notice the musty odor, until someone else pointed it out to me. I immediately stopped using the car, but my father, who is ninety years old, and "doesn't believe that there is mold in the car, and if there is, he doesn't believe it can make you sick", has continued using the car. So, consequently, my symptoms disappeared, and he has remained very sick FOR THIRTEEN MONTHS. Each day he comes up with a different rationale for why he is sick. He finally agreed to pull back the car carpeting, and he saw the QUARTS OF WATER in the floor wells. With the carpet pulled back, we could see that water was flowing in from a spot that we had not known about. Having found the source of the water inflow, he "allowed" me to cut away the carpeting, without ever admitting it was moldy (ninety year old men never admit they were wrong). If we can stop the leak, we will install new carpeting. Surprise! I discovered that disposing of moldy car carpeting was an even better way to get sick than disposing of moldy linoleum. That was a week ago, and I am still sick. It usually takes me about two to three weeks, after exposure to mold, before I am healthy again. I would like to see my father healthy, while he is still with me. The only thing worse than people thinking that WE are crazy, is when we see a loved one suffering because THEY think we are crazy when we try to save THEM from suffering.

The rest of the story: On October 11, 2008, my father died. Mold killed him.