A Real Mold Case: What Actually Works Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Introduction to Mold as a Masquerader

That's why we call mold the ultimate masquerader because you could have a family of five in a house and each one has different presentations of mold distress.

A kid could had eczema, skin issues, prone to anxiety. The mom could've had reproductive health issues. Difficult periods, fibromyalgia, endometriosis.

Their dad could of fatigue and joint pain and depression. Another kid can have digestive issues and another kid have brain on fire. Symptoms are only part of the story.

I'm Dr. Drew Kidder. I am Dr Emily Hernandez. And on the healing terrain, we explore deeper systems influencing clinical outcomes from toxic burden and microbial imbalance to the foundational factors that drive resilience and long-term health.

Hi, I'm Dr. Emily Hernandez, naturopathic doctor and here with the Cellcore podcast, Healing the Terrain. I am a clinical educator and I' m here w s Sinclair Canale and excited to talk about molds.

So before we get in, tell us a little bit about you and what you do when it comes to mold and your profession. Yeah, so as a practitioner, this was never in my line of sight until I got really, really sick myself and ended up in the emergency room thinking that I was having a heart attack and convinced that i was dying.

Oh, yeah. And the problem was the EKG didn't show anything. Yeah. They did the MRI or the CAT scans or blood work. So they got, they were really excited about me when I came in like, oh, we have a live one here.

Hospitalists all gathered around, like they're going to take a turn, but there's nothing to cut out. Then there was no way to save my life that day that they could see with their tools.

Dr. Sinclair Canaleu2019s Personal Mold Illness Story

I actually ended up after a couple of days checking myself out and I thought I was going home to die. because there was nothing they could do for me, and it sounded like psychosomatic or something that was just beyond their can.

And I wish I could tell you it was a fast journey from there, but it wasn't. It took us eight years to figure me out and pull me back from what felt like the jaws of death.

I was down to three foods, I couldn't read an email or write a sentence. It was so foggy. You know, and I got lots of diagnoses along the way. Lyme, Hashimoto's, fibromyalgia, GERD, SIBO, yadda yada.

Rheumatoid arthritis, tinnitus, you know. Anxiety, depression, all the eating disorders. All the suicidal ideation. But we always have to ask ourselves, what are the root causes of those things?

Because the body doesn't make mistakes. Right. And, as a trained traditional naturopath, that's what we look at is the bodies own intelligence. And, you know, our scope is stewardship of the body.

Yeah. You know? So what is the buddy trying to tell us with these symptoms? Yeah, because that's their language. Right. And it's just a matter, are we listening or not?

Right? What happens is for so many of us, we get these exposures for periods of time and we're healthy enough in the beginning. So we are compensating, compensated, but the bird body burden is getting bigger.

We think we were fine. This little whisper is like, oh, I'm a little more sensitive than I used to be a long time, but that's a stress, right? Body burden coming up, compensating, compensation, compensate, hit your threshold, crash.

Right. So it feels like that. I woke up one day and it just, yep. How did that just happen overnight? I was healthy a year ago or beginning of the year.

Yeah. These things bioaccumulate, you know, small exposures over time. Your system stops responding as it should. And now all of a sudden the, the pipes are overflowing.

Yeah, and one of the childhood bedrooms that I lived in had mold in it. Looking back, didn't put that together until I was already well. Yes, your childhood bedroom counts.

Your childhood basement counts flooding every year. Yeah. You know, you're college dorm room and black molding the bathroom. Is there your car? Yeah! I haven't asked about cars.

My car had it in my 20s. I live in Portland. It was always tiny. Right. Whatever, it's a car. Didn't want to pay to fix it, yeah. So it not just, has your house had water damage?

It's all these other aspects to be thinking about. So whether you're currently living in mold or you have a past burden, they both are bioaccumulating.

All right. And what are some of the symptoms? How would someone know that they're dealing with a mold toxicity issue? That is the really tricky part. That's why we call mold the ultimate masquerader, because you could have family of five in a house, and each one has different presentations of mold distress.

A kid could have eczema, skin issues, prone to anxiety. The mom could had reproductive health issues. Difficult periods, fibromyalgia, endometriosis. Right.

Their dad could has fatigue and joint pain and depression. Another kid can have digestive issues and another kid have brain on fire, ADHD. You never think it's all related to the same thing.

Yeah, they're all different symptoms. It's a great point. What are some of the things they know mold is kind of coming up more in our today in the communications?

How Mold Exposure Bioaccumulates Over Time

Patients are even starting to ask, you know, I think maybe there's a mold issue and so it's becoming part of The conversation a little bit more, but where would you see there are still some discrepancies or not the full picture?

Yeah, first of all, i'm thrilled that we're having this conversation as a community. I'm sure you're very passionate about this topic. But there's some gaps still in how we're looking at it.

First of all, prior exposure counts as well as current exposure. And as practitioners get more literate with this, you know, they're thinking about the current home, but also not all mold testing methods are equal.

So you can get a lot of false negatives. Like I sent in the plates, there was nothing. It doesn't mean they were used correctly, and it might not have been the proper testing methodology given the source of mold in that home currently.

So a negative is not a rule, just like parasite testing. It's just a window of information at best. And there's best practices. This is literally why we made a whole year-long certification called Toxin University, because we have to close these gaps for practitioners.

Because the other thing I see happening is As the public gets exposed to these ideas, which is so wonderful

because we want everybody to be in charge of their own health, they don't know the difference between one mold detox and another.

And not all mold detoxes are great and equal. Most are garbage and can actually hurt you. So not all created equal. So the order of operations matters.

Foundational support matters, mitochondrial support, matters the quality of binders matter. You know, medication is not necessarily better. We've had clients end up in the hospital on the mold medications that are supposed to be gentle and get on extreme things like colostomy bags because of it.

Recognizing Mold Symptoms Across the Family

So first, because I want to learn more about your kind of typical go-tos, but you mentioned a little bit about the testing and not all the test is equal.

What do you typically suggest to people if they're suspecting that there's mold in their environment? What are some of your top go tos? First, we created what we call a 100-point mold inspection checklist.

I want you first to check what you can see with your eyes, because it's free, and we're looking for moisture damage. So swelling underneath a window sill, swelling on a floorboard, a place along the wall where the drywall screws pop out.

Yes, you want to use your nose, but most molds actually do not have an odor to them. And remember, most mold are actually out of sight. because they love cellulose.

They're totally happy to hang out under the floorboards, behind the drywall, even in the, they loved the wallpaper glue. Oh, yes. Some fun for them to snack on.

And it's often in attics and crawl spaces. So we think about how does water move around your house and through your home and potentially into your own house.

Those are the places that we check first because you would be amazed what you can notice. Just these little clues. This is worth a deeper look because that's free.

And then we want to look for, and you can use like moisture meters, those moisture cameras. They're getting cheaper and cheaper. Those are fun. It's a layer of information.

Right. Doesn't rule it out. Yep. And, then, we wanna look at something like the ERMI test. Okay. Because that, as a dust collection Swiffer test, is really important to do it correctly.

Yeah. We wanna check additional boxes. Like, We need to know if fusarium is in there.

Testing Gaps and Why Mold Diagnostics Vary

So, always check box number 26 on the Ermi test And then we also, from there, if we get a positive, we start to look at bringing in a mold dog next because they're more cost effective.

Don't tell the duo anything. Let them work their process. We teach you ways to vet if they know what they're doing first before you invest. But like, this is gathering layers of information is how I would think about it versus spending $10,000 upfront, crossing your fingers that this person isn't gonna, you know, take advantage of you.

Right. Mold remediation is not cheap. And that's the environment piece. Typically, before we even get to that point, we would have tested internally. Okay.

So we'd run a urine panel just to see what's in there. Is that thing coming out? Yeah. You know? And then we

determine whether it's past or present exposure.

Awesome. And I've even seen where, and maybe you see this in your practice too, where initially we don't see a whole lot on urine testing, but then once we start to work on their drainage and detox pathways, all of a sudden the mold markers go up and people are like, wait a second, I thought we were supposed to reduce the molds.

And do you experience that? Do you that happening? Yeah, of course, because what you're measuring is the body's ability to let go right now. And so it's nothing to be scared about if those numbers are going up for the first few months.

That's a sign your body is back on board. Starting to work as it should. It's in a position to letting go. Yeah. You're doing the right things as long as you can tolerate your detox.

Right. But what I will say is we're not looking for red on the urine panels. We're looking forward, did anything show up at all? Yep. And so like varicarin A and varicarin J, like black molds, a little goes a long way.

So even if it's in the green, it absolutely warrants doing an army test. That's a great point. It's in the green, yeah. Every mold and every mycotoxin within that mold, because molds can create like over a dozen different mycotoxins, sometimes many run that.

Each myco toxin has its own personality, different level of poison, and targets a different system of the body. So each one has a personality and we got to pay attention to those ones that are really from the black holes.

But it is about cumulative burden. 10 markers, but they're all in the green and they are all really low. All that's telling me is your body's been through a lot and you're not excreting very well.

But all those molds are potentially colonizing inside of you and competing for space. They don't like that. Yeah. they will become more poisonous in what they excrete to elbow other organisms out of the way.

Okay, so you've done the testing on your home, you're done with testing urine, and you see that there's definitely some mold issues going on.

Environmental Inspection and Home Testing

What's kind of your typical approach? What types of things that are your go-tos? Well, it's very contextual. So we start with the human first. Right, let's provide some foundational support in this process because it is typically a long road for folks to remediate or move, or they're often renting and they are not in a position to do that, even if their landlord is willing to work with them.

Yeah, but we do get it sometimes. It's a process. So we're focusing on internal support the full time while we are evaluating the space and what needs to be done.

And we also layering things in like proper air filtration and ventilation and making sure that they don't go through and try to remediate this themselves because that's when you can get really, really sick.

Yeah. I know a lot of people will say, oh, I just use bleach. I know. So tell us why should we not use bleach and what should use instead? You're going to release more harmful compounds in the process and it could be devastating to a body that's already on the back foot and depleted of energy and overloaded with toxins.

It can be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Let's step away from the bleach. I mean, we can do short-term fogging. Again, it's contextual, and I don't want to send anybody down the wrong rabbit hole.

It's just in the short term. But we do do a lot of foging and air filtration and ventilation and also removing, offending things, but it depends on where the source is coming from.

Thing number one is if it is related to water damage and there's an ongoing leak, how can we stop that? Right, you know. And we're also establishing a sleep sanctuary at the same time.

So sometimes that's about pulling out the rug from underneath the bed. Yeah. You know, and making sure there's air filtration at least in the bedroom and fresh linens and, even getting off of that toxic mattress, if that is in budget, because your body, making that it's a Wi-Fi free environment and low EMF.

There's many different kinds of EMS and they all impede the body's ability to excrete and regenerate and even process certain toxins while you're asleep.

They also upregulate E. coli, strep, you know, and all these pathogenic strains.

Urine Testing, Detox, and Interpreting Results

So you can have a microbial impact of that right when you least afford it from all that fungus. So sleep sanctuary, huge for mold detox. Yeah, because it often affects sleep too, right?

So we know that that's when our immune system regenerates itself and heals. And we should be, you know, that when the lymphatic system wants to flush out at night, all that brain fog you're getting from mold is partially this neural inflammation that cannot calm down because you literally don't have the drainage pathways open and the brain drains last.

Yeah, okay. I think some people feel like if they can't get out of their environment, what's the point of even treating? You know, more practitioners and patients sometimes, right?

It's like, well, I'm not going to treat you until you move out your environment. Or, oh, you know I don't want to spend the time if I can move right now.

But like what is your thought on that? Because it's hard for people to totally uproot their lives and move when, you know… It is so contextual. It really is.

So making big sweeping judgments about this is, I think, irresponsible. And so it really comes down to your level of sensitivity, your current symptoms, and the mold exposure itself.

We've had people sleep in tents in their own backyard. Wow. you know, because they feel safer there and they get immediate relief. Yeah. And sometimes that's what it takes until you get enough momentum with your health that you can make the good decisions about what would be best for you or your family.

We're staying with a buddy and sleeping on their couch. I did for periods of time. Yes. When I slept on people's floors. You know and I don't feel bad about that time period of my life, I needed to do that.

So I won't say any of that lightly but I think the mold celebrities that are getting a lot of traction right now are doing more harm than good when they say things like, Well, if it's taking longer than six months, you're doing it wrong.

But also, I don't work with anybody until I get out of a moldy environment.

Foundational Support and Safe Remediation

That is completely unethical because you are talking about a huge section of the population that desperately needs your help right now and creates some safety and stability in the body.

And they shouldn't have to figure that out on their own. Yeah. Do you still think it is worthy to have binders in place if you can't get it out your environment?

The second you tolerate those bindings, they should be on board. Yes, even when you're in the molding

environment. Yes. Absolutely. Awesome. Yeah. Well, thank you.

I think we're almost out of time, but any last kind of, you know, take homes for everybody? Yeah, I guess. So some stuff that's getting missed in mold detox right now.

Maybe it's just the Instagram algorithm that I have. Right. there's folks that get frustrated and they're like, I found mold or I suspected mold, or somebody told me I had mold.

And then I tried this mold detox and I felt worse, not better. So I realized it must not be the mold that was really my nervous system. Now I tap my face or went on an anti-anxiety med and was wrong about the molds.

It's like well, wait a minute. Let's really ask ourselves some deep questions here. The body doesn't make mistakes. Right. So it has its own innate intelligence of how to process the stuff.

It's just more overloaded than ever before. Yep. And mold itself is directly harmful to the nervous system. Exactly. Yes, of course it directly attacks and mycotoxins directly attack the nerves, neurons, the myelin sheath.

And it's sending signals into the body, hey, there's poison here. And the nervous system responds in kind, oh my God, I'm not safe. You're not going to talk therapy your way out of being internally poisoned.

So we want to respect and love this vessel for our beings. And we need to address it head on. And if you aren't happy with the approaches you've taken so far, it just means you're still on your learning curve and you need just set your standards higher for your practitioners or the tools you are using or ask more nuanced questions.

We've all had to do that learning curves though and we are so worth it.

Living in Mold, Binders, and Nervous System Support

So please don't give up on yourself. Your body is not making a mistake. Let's not just use band-aids. Well, let's use the nervous system support to up-regulate detox, but not to ignore or dismiss your body's very real needs.

working on it together, right? Absolutely. Well, thank you so much. I could talk to you all day at your wealth of knowledge in the mold world, and we need more practitioners like you that are really focusing on helping this population.

There's a lot of us out there that is dealing with mold issues, so make sure you're reaching out to people that really know what they're talking about.

Thanks, Sinclair. So thank you so much for your time. Really appreciate it. All right. Take care, everyone. Thanks for listening to The Healing Terrain.

If this episode challenged the way you think about health and healing, please follow, share and leave a review. It helps more practitioners and curious listeners discover the conversations shaping the future of foundational medicine.