Is Mold Behind Your Family's Mystery Symptoms? Transcript

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Introduction to the podcast and mold topic

Healthcare system is not helping with that right so we really just have to you know put the truth and the latest science into these books like I feel like by next year I'll probably need to write a second edition of that because there's always more research coming out but and it's all coming out about how mold affects all these different body systems.

It's at the forefront of what people should be reading about, learning about, and keeping in mind as you travel, as you look for a new place, as you think about what is causing your mystery symptoms.

What if aging isn't about slowing down but leveling up? I'm Dr. Isaac Jones. This is the Longevity Leaders podcast. Hi, I'm Dr. Ashley Beckman. We're here with the Longevity Leaders podcast, and today I have Diana, the detox doc.

Thanks for having me, Dr. Ashley. Of course. So today we're going to dive into mold, which sounds like both of our favorite topics, right? Yes, absolutely.

So glad to talk about this. Do you want to tell me a little bit how you got into this specific root cause? Yes, so we did have a personal mold exposure situation several years ago.

It was a rental in Maryland. It was our first house. And we were so excited to just grow a family there. And so it was me and my husband. And we had two of our three kids lived in that house.

Our son was a toddler. And then our older daughter was an infant at the time. And so we moved in this house.

Personal mold exposure and family symptoms

We actually found pretty quickly that it had some mold, but we didn't think it was that big of a deal because even though I had been to med school, it's not taught in med school.

It's just mold causes allergies. And if you're not allergic to mold, then you're pretty much fine, which as we both know is not the case. So we started getting symptoms from this mold that we knew the house had and which we had told the landlord about and which had been painted over and remediated or cleaned up or whatever they said.

And then we all had various different symptoms. So that's the other thing with mold is that people get different symptom clusters. So my husband had preexisting GI issues.

So his gut was already not that healthy. His gut just got worse and worse and worse. And then myself, I had some of the more invisible symptoms like the brain fog, the mental health issues, which was very unusual for me.

And, you know, we write these things off due to other causes, hormones or whatever. And then my son, who was a toddler, had fatigue as a toddler, which is not normal.

And he had frequent urinations. We were getting these labs done. We thought he had diabetes. It was all of these different random symptoms. He had a couple episodes of wheezing, which we said maybe that was the mold.

That was the only thing that we said, well, maybe that was the mold. But the rest of it, we didn't connect. And then my infant, She had basically colic like she didn't sleep well in the house that we had to take her out of the house and drive around to go to sleep, which I firmly believe all these babies who you know sleep better when they're not in the house.

It's not just this cute thing that they like being driven around and they like the motion of the car. I firmly believe that it's the environment that they can't sleep there well.

So we ended up moving, thankfully. And I got better mostly just from moving and not being in that environment. But my husband had to do a functional medicine workout because he wasn't getting better.

And that's when we saw the functional labs come back. And so he got his gut tested. He got the mycotoxins urine. And it was all off the charts. And this just blew my mind.

I said, why don't I know about these labs? This is much more interesting than a CBC. All of your other labs were normal. Why are all these labs abnormal now?

And why am I not doing this? So from that point on, I knew I wanted to help people who were in that same situation and who had these normal labs and had just been in the system and seen for five minutes and like, oh, you're fine.

Probably just some chronic fatigue. And that combined with the fact that I already liked root cause medicine and I did primary care. So it was a lot of seeing patients very quickly and we never really had enough time to do what primary care is supposed to do, which really follow up on how people are doing with all of their various realms of their health.

So it took some time to get out of the medical system. just logistically, but I now do functional med, all virtual and video visits with people across the country and world.

Functional testing and leaving the medical system

And it's really rewarding because I do help with gut and mold and toxins because with mold it's not just the mycotoxins, but so many other toxins that we're exposed to with mold.

It's so great to actually see that healing and to see the light bulbs go off. Oh, yeah, like make the connections being made. And to really be able to help people in that way.

Well, I'm putting it together for people, right? It's so common that they get normal labs back, but they feel the same. They're very sick. And usually, like what happened with you, it's a family, right?

I love working with families because it presents really differently. Usually there might be one person who's not that sick, right? And then some people are very sick within the unit.

And it's very frustrating in most people without the education don't think that that could be one same toxin doing that to them, right? Just manifesting in completely different systems of the body.

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Yeah, so true. Mold likes to prey on your weaknesses.

How mold worsens underlying health issues

Yes. It cuts down what you've already got going on. Yeah, so a lot of us, right, if you grew up with respiratory things, it might hit there, or it might hit your joints, or then again, the mold might lower your immune system, and then you run the test for Lyme, and then you realize actually Lyme is a piece of the puzzle, right?

So it's just, it's really tricky, and I'm sure, I know in my practice, over 95% of my patients have So I'm sure you see something similar. Yeah, absolutely.

I mean, almost, yeah, 95 or more percent. I remember two people. Yes, I can think of two people as well. That's so funny. I'm being very generous on the 95%. Exactly, exactly.

So I mean, but I have seen, you know, as people heal, then of course they clear. But when they come in, it's the toxins from environment, from food, from everything.

And it's all just adding together. And that inflammation piece is so key to calm that inflammation so that the body can actually process out just taking out what's in the way, basically, of the detox processes of the body.

So I think a big thing, too, are these like mold facts that people think that are untrue, right? Do you have any that come off kind of top of mind? I know there's a lot.

Yeah, there are so many misconceptions when it comes to mold still. So a lot of them are around the, so there's the home side and the body side, right?

So we've got the home misconceptions like clean mold bleached, and it's still really common to think that. It's the number one thing on Google. Exactly.

Follow us, Google. Exactly. Cleaning mold with bleach is not the way to go. Also, there is the misconception that if you take one air sample test in the middle of the room and it's fine, then your entire house is fine.

Common mold misconceptions and testing

It really depends on where is the mold and what kind of mold it is and is it producing spores and all of that, whether it's going to come up on an air test.

You really have to have a full assessment to get a full picture of the environment. And then we touched on one already on the health side that mold only causes allergies.

It does cause allergies, but it can cause toxicity, as you mentioned, and it can colonize, and it can be in biofilms, and it can cause inflammation. So it for sure can affect every system of the body in a variety of different symptoms.

So, and then I think another misconception is that there's only, you know, one way to go about healing. I think it's important to have certain pieces in place, but I think some people think, okay, there's, you know, the protocol, like one of the original protocols, Shoemaker protocol is like the way to go, but some people do not do well in that.

I have many clients who tried that and who felt worse. And then we have to go about it in a different way and we have to make sure the drainage pathways are open before you do the detox and binders and things like that.

And then nervous system work and antifungals if you need it for other reasons and colonization and candida balance and things like that. You know, it's not like a one-size-fits-all, like you have strep, you're going to get, you know, do some natural things maybe or get a monocystilum, but it's like, it's not that easy correlation that people have also been taught by the regular medical system that it's like, oh, can I take 10 days of something and be done with mold?

You really can't. It's a whole process. It's about a year. Yeah, it is a whole process, definitely. So, there's just so many. Oh, one more really good one that I do want to mention is that, or really common one I should say, is that black mold is the only thing we need to worry about.

Oh, right. So, because every color of mold can be toxic. Even white mold or there's purple mold, my personal favorite, only because it looks cool, not because I like that it's toxic.

There's all colors of mold and all of them can put off toxins into the air and really just affect the body. And then probably a few others I'll just think of too.

It's like if you don't smell it or see it, it's not there, or that all homes have mold, which again, most homes do have some amount, but mostly there's a pathogenic nature that will cause someone in your home to get sick, right?

And so we're always working at trying to get your home as healthy as possible for the most sick person in your home.

Why mold treatment is individualized

And a lot of the time, again, it's these little kids, if they were born in the house with mold, those are some of my sickest clients. And they present, like you were saying, what's kind of the asthma, what I see a lot is eczema, right?

So any of my eczema kiddos that are two, we have to run that test. And I've yet to not see it be there. But it's really sad, right, because they go down the route of steroids and all these other things.

Granted, cleaning up the mom's diet and the kid's diet is really critical, but there's usually something else. Yeah, and the steroids just cut down the immune system further, and so then it's like skin problems are gut issues, for sure.

So you wrote your book. When did you write this? So Concrete Mold, actually, it's almost the anniversary, the one year anniversary of its release. So it came out in October last year.

And so I wrote this book with my husband, Andrew. And we really just wanted to make it more accessible for people to learn about mold and it has real photos of real mold in it, you know, just to kind of drive home the point of what exactly we're talking about.

It is the only published mold book that has photos of real mold in it. And so it has my four pillars of mold detox, which are to protect the body, to open the detox pathways, mobilize the toxins, and bind the toxins.

So all those pieces have to be in place. And then we talk about some of the comorbidities like Lyme and parasites and all those different things, viruses, absolutely, and like mast cell.

So all these different things that we see because mold cuts down the immune system, So it's not as much about our story that's in the intro, but it's just giving people some tools for healing and I also have a book on candida candida detox and a book on gut health called the inner journey and we have one coming out soon on Crohn's disease so but this is kind of the biggest project as far as a book goes that we've done and I just love seeing people messaging me saying, I read your book and it helped me heal.

Yes. Because not everyone's going to work with me one-on-one, but to read a book and be able to get some tools is just really great.

Mold, relationships, and emotional impact

Well, and the thing that happens with mold is it's really devastating, right, for health, finances, and often for the relationships of the family. So I'm sure a lot of the clients, they have a very strained marriage or partnership, especially when one of them is not that sick and, you know, one of the other people in the home is very sick.

So I know that that's a big piece that a lot of clients are wishing there was more support for, right, was like helping the sick person throughout this process, especially when the other partner doesn't even believe that the mold is a big problem in the house.

So true. Yeah. I mean, it really devastates relationships with the mold rage, like episodes of… And then mold fear, right? They're afraid to travel, to go anywhere tropical.

And again, it's because it's your home, which is your safe place that no longer feels safe. And so it's a really, I would say mold is one of the worst things to go through, right?

That is one of these kind of invisible illnesses that we have a lot of now, like mast cell and these things. But that's one thing that's great is when you have a book, you at least get all this information from a trusted practitioner who's been through this, who knows this, because the amount of information online is very outdated and often just incorrect.

And a lot of our clients are in Facebook chat groups with a lot of information that they're getting from various sources that isn't always ideal for that individual case.

Oh so true and just I think one of the most damaging parts of some groups is the negativity. Yes. Because it just can really cut people down even if they've made a little bit of progress and then maybe they've stalled then seeing some other negativity will just help make them spiral.

Right. So I think being positive and just going okay these are the facts like this what's going on this is what I'm trying to do maybe there's a little setback you maybe had another exposure like I ate something I didn't know was high mold or whatever, but not to get discouraged, not to give up because some people get very hopeless with mold, like extremely hopeless.

And especially because it's such a long process and you're asking them to do these protocols for many months to years, depending on how sensitive they are.

And then the same, it's costly, but at the same time, too, it has a lot of benefits. It's just trying to steer that course for so long. We know it's very difficult, and we've both been through it, so we get it.

But at the same time, you have to have that positive outlook that it will get resolved. It's true. Because it will. Yeah, it's so true. And yeah, I mean, it's great for us to be telling people that because even though there are setbacks, you have to keep that positive mindset almost as if it's a prescription that you gave yourself.

It's not because everything is peachy. It's because you are determined to heal. And we have voiced that healing is possible for mold.

Writing the mold book and healing resources

And so it's not because everything is going great. but just a thing you have to do, self-talk. Yes, very important. Let's see, with your book, do you put in some of your protocols?

I do, yeah. So it's a little bit more general. I have my updated protocols in my Mold course, which is an online course, which is a little bit more, like a platform is a little bit more conducive to having protocols there.

But we do have a list of the supplements that are applicable to each of those four pillars. And so people can kind of see, OK, Well, how are my drainage pathways, for example, are you constipated or not?

How much support do you need in that area? So we say, OK, if you do have constipation, these are some things to look into. So it's kind of like you have to do a little bit more self-reflection in looking at what your symptoms are because, like we said, it's not just one thing that's going to work for everybody.

So I do have lists in there like, OK, if you're constipated, consider these different things. If not, then you probably don't need them. If you have diarrhea, on the other hand, there's probably more inflammation going on.

So we need to up the anti-inflammatories and gut calming supplements. So yeah, it's kind of like an if-then situation there. Yeah, because people always want the magic pill, the magic protocol.

And unfortunately, we're just too complex. And it manifests in different organ systems, which require different

support. So true. Yep. So with your clients, are you able to navigate with them one-on-one, or is everything through programs?

So yeah, I do online programs. So we do monthly video visits, and then I check in with them usually every two weeks or so to make sure that they're still doing well and doing everything.

And then I try to work with people for at least six months, because as you said, mold can take, I like to tell people six to 18 months. Some people, it would be great to work with them for 18 months, and I have some people for 18 months to really just clear everything, because sometimes those layers get uncovered, like lime or parasites or more issues get uncovered, and then we have to deal with those and it takes more time.

So yeah, that's how I do things. Yeah, and I think that's the thing. It's really a challenge, right? Because this falls into the complex illness space.

And so we never just see a straight mold case. It's always impacting something else and then allowing other either parasites or Lyme or viruses to be a very active part of their health puzzle.

Absolutely. And then now we have this mold as a very common route of mast cell and some histamine issues, which is, again, we're just seeing more complex cases that are very difficult.

Right. So true. Yeah, I mean, and that has to sometimes be calmed down first before anything else will work because it's just reacting to everything. Right.

So this should help, but it's not helping. So we have to take a step back when it comes to mast cell a lot of times. Yep. So let's see, is there anything else that you want to share about either your book or your upcoming book?

So I can share about my upcoming book, which is on Crohn's disease. So my husband healed. Well, I like to say that I had a part in it. He healed himself from Crohn's disease.

He used to take medications for Crohn's disease. Now he has only supplements. And so he wrote a book almost 10 years ago now on how he did that. But now this book, it has my voice and his voice.

Upcoming Crohn's book and broader environmental illness

And as you mentioned, even if it's not exactly Crohn's disease, a lot of gut issues do come with mold. And so I see it overlap so many times. So it's going to be really useful for people to read about the thought process behind from the patient side and from the practitioner side.

And so we're doing a two-voice book there, which is a little bit different than what we've done before. And it just is really powerful. And so I'm really excited for people to read that.

There's a lot of really neat charts and graphics in there. As well as in this book, there's a lot of charts on, you know, which binders work for what and all sorts of different visuals in there because, you know, a picture's worth a thousand words.

So I like to include a lot of photos and graphics and things in my books. So we're just trying to get as many resources out there for people as possible Because it's I mean the health care system is not helping with that right so we really just have to You know put the truth and the latest science into these books like I feel like by next year I'll probably need to write a second edition of that because there's always more research coming out but and it's all coming out about how mold and affects all these different body systems.

So I think it's at the forefront of what people should be reading about, learning about, and keeping in mind as you travel, as you look for a new place, as you think about what is causing your mystery symptoms, or your families, or your friends, or your neighbors.

So it's important to keep in mind just keep environmental illness in mind and just the fact that it can cause or worsen anything that you have going on.

Right. It basically just throws fire on a, or gasoline on a burning fire. Yeah. And unfortunately, it really just implicates so many different systems.

And I mean, the only reason we know that is because we see it in practice. It doesn't make sense, really, from what we've learned medically, that something can potentially affect basically every organ system in your body.

But Paul does it. So true. Yeah. Anything else you'd like to share? So I think the one other resource that I didn't talk about as much is the healing community.

I love to be a positive voice for people and have a positive space for people to come to. My Healing Community is on school. That's S-K-O-L. And that is a hub where people can come and ask questions and things.

So if anyone listening is going through any mystery symptoms, then definitely reach out. Let's check out some of the resources.

Community resources and closing remarks

And we can help. Perfect. And so where can we find you? So I'm the Detox Doc on all platforms. And my website is drstafford.com. Perfect. Thank you so much for joining us today.

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Until next time, stay strong and live long.