Medical-Grade Mold Inspections: Finding a Mold Inspector Who Understands Chronic Illness Transcript

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Introduction to Mold Inspections

As a mold inspector, you never want to be incentivized to find mold. In fact, I tell all of our clients before the inspection and maybe on a phone call before it's like, I hope to come into your house and find absolutely nothing.

Because that means we ruled that out and you can start going down the list of everything else that might be ailing you. But it's sadly not the case. So can people do it?

Yes. Should you find somebody that's completely separate? I think that's the best path forward. I mean, that's why we chose as a company to not even touch remediation other than the expression of how to do it medically sound and accurate.

If you're overwhelmed with chronic health symptoms and still don't have answers, you're not alone. I'm Dr. Javin, and on redefining wellness with Dr. Javin, we'll be exploring root causes like Lyme disease, mold, and parasites, and I'll guide you with simple and practical steps towards real healing.

Today we're going to be talking about mold inspections. And this is a topic that gets some people up in arms a little bit, especially when I'm talking to them in my clinic, because Jason, you're an expert in this category.

But most of us, when we go to buy a house, we just call the regular mold inspector guy and It's 400 bucks, they come in, they look around, they walk out.

And I always tell people, those guys' job is to make sure it's not so egregious that you can't sell your home. It's a good way to put it. When you're sick, you need something different.

And that's why I wanted to interview you today. I also am going to use this content specifically because I want to put it together a guide, visual audio, and written for my patients so they know what to look for when they're looking for mold inspectors.

So today is going to be the grill of what do they need to find, what do they need to know so that they can best be able to get the results both in their home, which then can allow me to be able to help them get results in their health.

Questions to Ask a Mold Inspector

Sure. Absolutely. So my first question is, if I'm looking for a mold inspector as an individual who has no knowledge in mold, what is your top three questions that you would ask this person that you're calling and saying, hey, Mr.

Mold Inspector, do you blank to make sure that you at least would go to step two, like moving forward? Well, um, well, I would say, do you, where do you, I would actually pose it as a, where do you sample?

How do you sample? What's your strategy? What's your protocol? Well, I would just ask them point blank. When you come into our home, what do you do? And hopefully they can run through an entire gamut of inspecting layered inspections that really leave no stone unturned.

Beyond that, I would really like to know where do you go after that? Are you somebody that's going to actually get around in our crawlspace? Are you going to put on a Tyvex and go to the corner of the crawlspace that nobody's been in 10 years?

Are you going to go to the attic and go to that one corner where it's questionable? It's something that's out of sight, out of mind for a lot of homeowners.

Um, you want somebody that will touch every corner of your home because for clients that you work with, your patients, I mean, that little, that little nuanced mold buildup, you know, behind their washing machine or wherever it might be is enough to keep them sick and keep them and not allow them to detox in the right way.

So you really, I mean, that's again, that's, that's where I would kind of start with somebody is where do you go in my home? Yeah. I always say with patients I'm working with, I want to leave no stone unturned because when I'm working with complex chronic illness, when I'm working with mold, each individual little itty bitty thing that you think, oh, don't worry about that, it stacks up, adds up and becomes problematic.

Now, when it is in mold, something else I want to add to that is When I call a mold inspector, not only do I want to know how they're testing and there's a number of different things they can do.

They could do an air sample in the middle of your room. I'm not saying that's good. Actually, I think that's not nearly enough. You can do wall cavities.

You can do moisture meters and thermal cameras. You could do dust samples and then multiple room air samples. You can go into attics and crawl space that you're talking about.

And that's all good. every mold inspector, building biologist, environmental specialist, depending upon the term the person wants to go by, that I've talked to that gets it, that understands what they need to do, they understand a tiny bit about the health too.

Of course. And you already made mention of that, like, if you're gonna get better, we have to do a gamut of things. When I call these mold inspectors, like yourself, and I say mast cell, I say SERS, you guys actually acknowledge what that is.

You're not gonna say, yeah, this is how you treat it. You've probably heard a lot about that when you're at the houses with these individuals you're inspecting for.

As much as we can. But you understand that mold can lead to Pan's Pandas. Absolutely. Mold can lead to anxiety and depression. And because of that understanding, I think you go a little deeper.

So let's talk about that testing piece. As far as mold testing, what tests are you gonna run on an average home?

How Mold Testing Works

On an average home, so the first testing we'll do is with a device called an Instascope. It's an advanced particulate scanner that allows us to wheel it into basically every single space in the entire house.

We can check half bathrooms, we're checking closets, we can get it into the crawl space, we can get it into the attic, we can check it. And what that's doing is it's quantifying in real time particulates and telling us what's mold, what's pollen, what's bacteria and viruses.

And so that allows us to see amplifications as we go around the house. And so we take that data point and then we transition into our visual inspection, which we're mold inspectors.

That's true. But what we're really there to do is find moisture intrusion points in your home. How is that water getting in so that it can take the mold that's naturally there in your normal fungal ecology and amplifying it and giving it everything it needs to grow?

And so that's where we're taking and we're looking. That's where we're doing that cavity testing and really getting behind. Because the way I kind of view it is, if the mold was in the center of a room, which is like how most folks

sample, they would have already taken care of it.

They would have already squashed it. Because the things that are really easy to fix and visualize, people tend to take care of. It's the things that are out of sight out of mind that we're really looking for.

And so in conjunction with that, we're going to then do an intensive visual across the thing where we're going to moisture map your entire room. We're going to look at entry points, doors, windows, you name it, everything.

Anytime somebody's cut a hole in your house for whatever reason, I want to make sure that there's not water getting into that point. Um, and so with that data, then we can actually go into our next phase, which is where we actually do our intensive sampling and try to tackle and get everything that we're curious about.

What are we concerned about? And sometimes it is truly based. We tell our guys, we want them to stay curious. Never just assume you know what's behind that wall, or you know what's on that ceiling, or you know kind of what's what.

Because honestly, we've tested in a lot of places where you'd be surprised what you find. And these hidden issues can just present themselves in so many different unique ways.

So it's basically a layered process that allows us to truly find just about everything we possibly can in a house. I just want to go back to Kami. He said, the air tests in the middle room, if you had a problem in the middle of the room, you'd have taken care of it.

Just to add to that, maybe you can expand upon this. Sure. I'm not a mold inspector. Some mold types don't just float through the air. They all live it.

They all live it different. Some molds, some molds aerosolize and can actually stay afloat with just the simple act of walking through a space. And they can literally stay on a cycle loop.

Some stay in that breathing zone that you and I are in right now. And some of them, honestly, some of the nastier ones like stachybotrys and ketomium, they're heavy, they're sticky, and they stay low.

And so actually one of the things that we've strategized and how we actually test is we don't like to test up in the five foot range. Usually we like to get about to as close to the ground as possible so that we can truly capture the most important ones that are truly affecting people.

Because again, we're looking for, a majority of the molds we're looking for, we're trying to aim for those toxigenic ones. Things like stachybotrys, ketonium, fusarium, trichoderma.

I mean, there's a lot of really nasty ones that just build up and don't let, just keep people sick. So some of these molds are heavy, they sit close to the floor.

Normal testing by a machine that's a three foot tall machine is not going to catch them. Yep. And, you know, sometimes I tell people, I go, well, what are the instructions when a mold tester comes in?

I put a machine in the room and say, leave the room so we don't stir it up. I'm like, well, I don't live in an environment that's not stirred. I live in a stirred environment.

I want to stir the environment because I want to know what it's like when I live there, not like when I'm gone. True. And so the air testing set, so one of the things that I was curious about was what is like the percentage of the room that you're actually capturing?

And so when you do a singular sample in the middle of a room, math is just not on your side. So take a 10 by 10 by 10 foot box, basically. It's 28,000 liters of air.

One air sample captures 75 liters. That's a quarter of a percent. So the way I kind of see it is if somebody did an air sample in the middle of your room and they captured, let's say, some staccibotrus, you have an infestation beyond belief because the likelihood that they captured that was so slim.

And so that's why I love things like, let's again, talk the math of a cavity space. the differential and the space that you're actually able to sample, it gets you about 60% of the entire cavity.

So it's just you're increasing the odds that you can capture what is ailing them. And that's what we're always trying to do is how can we make this process more efficient and more just complete so that people really, again, it's all about them trying to get better and tackling these little nuanced micro issues that are seemingly everywhere.

Why Air Sampling Alone Falls Short

Just about every home we go into usually has about 10 to 15 different issues that we find. So I just want to recap. We don't want to do a single mold air sample in a room.

We do want to have a multi-layered approach. Of those layers, you have a device that is defining what kind of the air quality is. You do a moisture test throughout the home and a visual inspection.

And then from there, you're going and doing a dust sample slash air cavity sample. Yeah, we're strategically sampling. So let's say, I mean, we were concerned about some something visible we saw in the bathroom.

Easy surface testing. Let's say we have some mold growth on a rafter. Great surface testing. We want to get behind a wall. We don't want to cut the whole thing open because we'd love you to still live there.

We're going to drill a small three eighths of an inch hole, plug some tubing back there, grab some cavity samples. Really just again everything we're curious about and then the main objective is to compile all that data and give them really solid health-based You know remediation instructions so they can get it fixed and have that information to get it fixed Now let's talk through that a little bit because I like what you're saying so far.

I feel like this is going to be very educational for our team. Remediation is the next process once you find it. Yep. And do you typically think it's a good idea or a bad idea for an inspection company to also be the remediators of all of the mold?

I think there's companies that can do it. I won't say that they all are bad, but I will say that it draws some questionable ethical conclusions because as a mold inspector, you never want to be incentivized to find mold.

In fact, I tell all of our clients before the inspection and maybe on a phone call before, it's like, I hope to come into your house and find absolutely nothing because that means we ruled that out and you can start going down the list of everything else that might be ailing you.

But it's sadly not the case. So can people do it? Yes. Should you find somebody that's completely separate? I think that's the best path forward. I mean, that's why we chose as a company to not even touch remediation other than the expression of how to do it medically sound and accurate.

Um, cause again, I'd never wanted to even have that, that, that possibility of, you know, again, ethics is, I think that's kind of the cornerstone of what we do here.

There's a lot of trust from our clients and your patients and everybody in between. So they kind of depend on us. So I don't know why even take the risk, I guess.

Love it. So then you said the appropriate way to do this on the remediation, you said there's a specific way that you help to guide people down a path.

Yes. Can you give the bullet points of remediation?

Remediation Best Practices

So when you've said, here's where the areas are, what should someone look for in a remediation company? What should they be doing? Should it be just open, open air?

Should they be cordoning it off? Yeah. Should it be, I'll just let you run from there. Yeah. Well, I like remediation companies that come from a place where they've already worked with folks that are in the health aspect.

I like them that they've already worked with patients who are mold sick and folks who are really sensitive to this stuff. Because number one, I think they take it more serious.

But I guess if I had to bullet point it, it's containment. You want to make sure that they are making sure that every entrance to their, you know, wherever they're doing their remediation is actually truly contained.

And even better if they can actually make like a buffer zone where it's like you're entering that containment. You can then, you know, put on your Tyvex or whatever you're putting on and then go into the next chamber.

You want to make sure that they're actually using air scrubbers, number one. And you want to make sure that those air scrubbers are vented outside. Because one of the biggest problems with HEPA, love HEPA, 99.97 down to 0.3 microns.

But guess what? Mycotoxins are 0.1 micron. And it's a problem. They breeze right by HEPA purification. So if you're venting it outside as they're ripping and tearing and agitating and doing what they do, because that's what's got to be done to get rid of it, that stuff can just get sucked in and blown right outside.

The final step, one of the biggest things that I think is missed in the remediation scope is what's called a small particle cleaning. where they're literally focusing on how can we get every single particle off of these off of the framing out of the house and just completely basically reset your space.

That's the that's the word I like my clients to use is that's the goal of this process is to get you back to I mean, back to the good times, back to before you went through all this song and dance and everything was, you know, came crashing down for a lot of these folks.

So it's just very important. That's small particle cleaning steps. So containment, air scrubbing, small particle cleaning, those are kind of like the biggest ticket items that I think people should be looking for.

Okay. Very good list. Completely agree with the list because I once had a person who we kept having numerous mold tests come back positive. three building biologists go through the house can't find the actual source.

And I'm getting confused at this point, and this was a couple years ago, and I was like, I don't understand what's happening. And what we found was the husband built the house, the wife knew about mold, made sure it was done, at least to her best of ability, correctly.

The cleaning wasn't done completely and fully on just a new home. And as moisture built up in South Carolina, mold grew on the sheetrock dust that was not completely cleaned out of the house, and it was not enough to visually see.

So then they eventually had somebody come in and was like, maybe you should just do a small product of cleaning. When they did this, they found a few mounds worth of sheetrock dust.

Mold is growing on the sheetrock dust, which wasn't enough to spread, but just enough to keep the place a little bit not right. I was honestly just thrown off by the fact that could be a problem.

And now I've just been able to have a different mindset when it comes to what could be causing a problem. Okay. So we've been through what to look for in the inspection, what to look for on the remediation.

What about retesting? Retesting. So post remediation verification, it's one of the more common things that we go out to do.

Post-Remediation Retesting and Wrap-Up

So what I love to do is after remediation, while containment is still up, while the wall is still open, I want to test basically, I mean, we honestly, I The way I see it is since you've, as a remediator, you have the benefit of, you have the scrubbers, you've got the containment, you've got everything should be immaculate.

I should be able to eat a dinner off of any piece of framing in that house. So we test. We test randomly at places. We're looking for specifics too. Like if there's something where we think they missed, we're going to test there too.

We compile the data. To be frank, that's kind of how I've started judging remediators. It's not necessarily on their ability to get it right the first time because we're human.

We're imperfect. But what I like is a remediator that says, you're right. I didn't do that great of a job. I'm going to go fix it. I'm going to get it right.

And honestly, those are some of the better ones we've worked with is the ones that they understand that their guys miss occasionally. So we test a lot of homes, but I think that poster mediation before build back, because what you don't want is for somebody to clear it and just say, yeah, this looks great.

Start building everything back. And then all of a sudden you get a little humidity, a little condensation and everything that was back there just starts having a party again.

And then you're right back into that hundred thousand dollar mess you just got out of. I've seen it too many times. Okay. So this has been incredibly enlightening.

I think this would be impactful for a lot of people that listen because you just gave the straight to the point, what to look for an inspector, what to look for for remediation, post testing, so we can get ourselves out of this process.

So where do you work? So I work with pure health mold inspections. We consider ourselves medical grade mold inspecting that we travel all across the nation, just trying to help as many people as humanly possible.

So nationwide, good. How do they find you? Find us at purehealthmold.com or heck, you can send me an email at info purehealthmold.com at any time. We've also got, of course, phone number, any contact method they prefer outside of carrier pitch.

That could be interesting though. I know, right? Just right to the source. All right. Well, I really appreciate you giving a little information. It's going to be useful.

And we're going to be actually cutting this up and using it for a guide in our clinics. Thank you. Absolutely. Anytime. Thank you for tuning in to Redefining Wellness with Dr.

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