



The Importance of Home Maintenance Cleanses

When it comes to industry wide acceptable levels of molds there are none.

In lieu of this we have developed the following step by step process specifically for our clients who require a higher standard of care due to being diagnosed with hypersensitivities to mold, biotoxin illness, Lyme, CFS, autoimmune issues etc.

First step, your average mold inspector typically performs assessments to meet goals set by their local state, city or real-estate agencies. In contrast our goals for our clients are two-fold. First, we assist clients in pinpointing source areas of concern where mold is located. Then we write the remediation strategies with the specific goal of reducing the overall fungal load below the baseline levels established by the labs taken during the initial inspection.

We go about accomplishing these goals by producing a very comprehensive inspection report that details all the lab, instruments and visual findings from all the source areas of concern (we were able to reasonably locate without stripping the home down to the frame). Then we write the remediation strategies **required** in order to properly address all the source areas of concern that were located.

Second, the remediator then picks up the ball by adhering to the remediation strategies outlined in our report. When the remediator has questions they can easily book a consult with the inspector to clarify. This process ensures that all source areas will be acknowledged and remediated in order to maintain the higher standard of care required by those with hypersensitivities.

Third, once the home is fully remediated, but before the client moves back into the home, post lab tests are performed to ensure the remediation succeeded in reducing the fungal ecology below the initial baseline.

Fourth, working with a healthcare professional who is well versed in mold illness is a critical individual to have on your team. This is the person to lean on when assessing and comparing your medical labs, home's environmental labs, and symptoms. In order to properly determine if the reduced fungal load, after remediation is completed, is at an acceptable level for you to move back into your home.

Every person's tolerance to mold is different. Meaning what is an acceptable level for you may not be an acceptable level for another person. This is why it is important for you to seek the guidance of a mold literate healthcare professional that you trust and resonate with.



Interstitial spaces harbor contaminated dust.

The age of your home dictates the age of your dust. If a home is 100 years old it will be harboring a century's worth of contaminated dust reservoirs deep inside unreachable interstitial spaces (i.e., between walls and/or other building materials). Many historical water events that produced fungal/bacterial/chemical contaminants during a home's lifetime are recorded within these old dust reservoirs. This cannot be directly accessed and removed by a remediator due to its location.

However, there is good news, for quite some time after remediation is completed this old dust is continuously deposited (in small quantities) into your living space on a daily basis, when the home breathes. This gives you the power and control to manually remove it slowly and methodically, over time, by consistently performing ongoing Home Maintenance Cleanses (outlined on page 3).

A home breathes and mobilizes dust.

Like a fingerprint each home will possess a unique normal fungal ecology specific only to that home. There are no baseline standards that can be set to represent what a home's normal fungal ecology "should be". The reason for this is because a home's normal fungal ecology will be influenced by the age of the home, its occupants, location, prevailing winds and the surrounding (natural and/or industrial) landscape ecology.

A home "breathes" through the pressurization that naturally occurs with differences between indoor and outdoor air densities and temperatures (aka the stack effect and/or air convection), and when opening windows/doors and/or turning on the HVAC/fans. This breathing is what circulates the surface dust in and around the home and HVAC unit.

If the home is not pressurized optimally that can also disrupt, mobilize and dump old contaminated dust reservoirs from inside the home's unreachable interstitial spaces into your living space.

Once that old contaminated dust settles in the common areas of your living space and the home naturally breathes it will easily circulate that dust throughout your home. These contaminants are light and easily mobilized, inhaled and dispersed onto our bodies. This is why it's important to perform ongoing Home Maintenance Cleanses that focus on dust removal.

Post testing best practices.

When you perform post-testing after remediation it is important to be mindful of limiting the amount of work/construction being performed in the yard, inside of the home, and/or to the



exterior of the home. Tree pruning/removal or other types of extensive yard work creates disruption in the outdoor habitat that can expedite mobilization of higher counts of mold contaminants into the living space via open windows/doors and/or the occupant's clothes/shoes. Similarly, as previously mentioned any construction to the home's interior/exterior will mobilize old dust reservoirs deep within the walls/interstitial spaces and deposit it into the living space. All of these activities can negatively skew the results when testing your home to assess if remediation was successful.

Moving out of the home during remediation.

Living in the home during remediation, moving back in before remediation is completed or moving back in before baseline testing has been completed can skew results. Living in the home creates pressure disturbances (possibly moving dust from interstitial spaces) and allows outside mold contaminants to be carried into the home (on our bodies/clothes) all of which can skew the results.

Testing Anomalies.

When remediation is completed and all source issues have been addressed a single elevated finding on a lab without added supporting evidence (i.e., additional labs, instrument findings, visuals or another water event) can indicate that old contaminated dust from the interstitial spaces and/or from an outdoor source is being deposited into the living space. All of which will skew the labs. In these situations, we recommend performing Home Maintenance Cleanses that focus on removing the contaminated dust that continues to be deposited into the living space from either the interstitial spaces and/or from the outdoors.

The Home Maintenance Cleanse.

First step, after remediation is completed have your home tested to evaluate if it is properly pressurized. Typically, this is called an energy audit. A properly pressurized home will help control the old dust, located in the hard-to-reach interstitial spaces, from being deposited into the living spaces of the home.

When an energy audit is performed, they will use blower door testing and often smoke testing to determine the locations of air leaks. After tests are performed steps will be recommended to improve the homes pressurization in the house (NOTE: please read note on page 4 about whole house fans recommended after energy audits which we do not advise use of).

Second, we recommend performing, at minimum, a once per week regular house cleaning with a special focus on dust removal. These weekly regular cleanings focused on dust removal will help to reduce the overall fungal load, on an ongoing basis.



Third, every three, six or twelve months we recommend performing the Maintenance Home Cleanse throughout the home. **NOTE: A step-by-step home cleanse is outlined in a separate document titled “DIY Home Maintenance Cleanse”.**

It is not recommended for individuals who are impacted to perform the home cleanse themselves. Instead, it is recommended that house cleaning service, friends, family members or a remediation company be recruited for help.

Frequency, the fundamental goal of both remediation and Home Maintenance Cleanses is to reduce the homes overall fungal load. One’s sensitivity will dictate the Home Cleanse frequency. Recruit the help of your mold literate healthcare provider to help you determine the best frequency for you:

- Quarterly ([DIY ERMI](#) test, if desired, 3-4 weeks after the 2nd and 4th cleanse).
- Every 6 months (DIY ERMI test, if desired, 3-4 weeks after the 2nd cleanse).
- Every 12 months (DIY ERMI test, if desired, 3-4 weeks after).

Waiting to test 3 - 4 weeks after the Home Maintenance Cleanse has been performed will allow the overall fungal ecology enough time to come back into equilibrium for the most accurate result. You may need to wait an additional 1 – 2 weeks longer if not enough dust has accumulated in your home 3 - 4 weeks after the cleanse.

For this reason, it will be important to adjust your normal weekly cleaning regimen by intentionally not dusting and allowing the dust to settle in your home for 3 – 4 weeks.

Weekly housekeeping focused on all the other cleaning tasks can and should still continue as normally scheduled. Once the ERMI has been successfully collected the weekly normal cleaning regimen focused on dust removal should be resumed.

Special note - The problem with whole house fans.

Specialists who perform energy audits often recommend installing a whole house fan in the attic. We do not advise this. These fans cause the house to breath harder by forcibly sucking dust out of the living space, from deep inside interstitial spaces, and the crawlspace; and all the contaminated dust is sucked straight into the attic. This often leads to fungal and bacterial issues in the insulation, wood frame and contents. As the home breathes the microbial issues created in the attic are distributed throughout the home; putting you in direct contact with the contaminants. The distribution of contaminants is enhanced when the HVAC units are also housed there.



The most important question - How do you feel in and outside of your home?

This is a very important conversation to continually have with a qualified mold literate healthcare professional. They are the most qualified team member to help you navigate what your symptoms are telling you about how you are feeling in your home.

You might consider keeping track of how you feel in the home after remediation is complete. If you and your mold literate healthcare professional have determined you are feeling better that is an excellent sign that things are indeed headed in the right direction.

Additionally, the indoor living space can be impacted by a source outside of the home. It is important to make note of the prevailing winds local to your area while simultaneously also taking note of industrial and/or natural ecologies that could be impacting your home (i.e., landfills, orchards, factories, forest, algae blooms, a neighbor's home that is impacted etc.). In short, prevailing winds could be blowing contaminants towards your home from other homes, industrial and/or natural ecologies which inevitably can contaminate your homes living space.

Composting in your yard or a neighbor's yard can negatively impact the living space inside your home. For this reason, it's important to make sure outdoor composting is not in the path of prevailing winds and it should be placed as far away as possible from your home's windows and doors. For the same reason we advise not to compost anything inside the home.

It is also important to be mindful of your surroundings when spending time outside of the home and how you feel both during and after when you are out and about. If you spend a lot of time at school, work, a store/business or a family members home that has/had water damage it could contribute to your symptoms that are independent of your home. This is a great conversation to continually have with a mold literate healthcare professional.

To sum it up – Reducing the fungal load inside your home.

After remediation is completed, if pressurization has not already been assessed, we recommend performing building analysis to ensure proper pressurization of your home.

Once your home is properly pressurized then follow up with the DIY Home Maintenance Cleanses either every quarter or six months, dependent on your level of sensitivity.

After completing the DIY Home Maintenance Cleanses, over a 12-month period, the homes fungal load and ongoing strategy should be reassessed and revised as needed based on your sensitivity.