

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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## Fungal Toxins and Multiple Sclerosis: A Compelling Connection

**Abstract:** Multiple sclerosis occurs as a consequence of central nervous system neuronal demyelination. Decades of research suggest that the primary suspects (e.g., viruses, genes, immune system) are associative rather than causative agents, but a surprisingly coherent relationship can be made between multiple sclerosis and fungal toxins. Specifically, certain pathogenic fungi sequester in non-neuronal tissue and release toxins that target and destroy CNS astrocytes and oligodendrocytes. Without these glial support cells, myelin degrades triggering the onset of multiple sclerosis and its associated symptoms. **We propose here that fungal toxins are the underlying cause of multiple sclerosis and thus may offer an avenue towards an effective cure.**

[Fungal Toxins and Multiple Sclerosis: A Compelling Connection](#)

## Ten Families Sue Military Housing Operator on the Former Fort Ord

Retired Air Force Staff Sgt. Thalvick Mosquera was laying in bed in 2009, recovering from ankle surgery and staring at the walls of his Seaside bedroom. He noticed a patch of mold growing, and then realized all the walls in the home were perpetually damp. When he and his family started asking around, they found they weren't the only renters at The Parks at Monterey Bay, an aging military housing complex on the former Fort Ord south of Lightfighter Drive, with moldy homes.

The Mosqueras started experiencing health problems that they attribute to the mold. Mosquera, who suffers from asthma and is medically retired from the air force, was hospitalized several times during the six months he lived on Nijmegen Road. His 8-year-old daughter suffered from chronic cold-like symptoms. The toddler of neighbors Shalynn and David Pruett fell ill and was hospitalized with pneumonia.

Now the Mosqueras and Pruett, along with eight other families, are suing the property management company that oversees all of the military housing in Seaside, Marina and Monterey, an arrangement forged with the U.S. Navy and Army in 2003.

The complaint, filed July 8 in Monterey Superior Court, names American Management Services, Monterey Bay Military Housing and Clark Pinnacle Monterey Bay, as well as several "doing business as" names as defendants.

"They never should've been renting these houses out," says plaintiffs' attorney Jim Fitzpatrick. "They should really not take the chance of playing Russian roulette with people's health."

[Ten Families Sue Military Housing Operator on Former Fort Ord, Complain of Toxic Mold](#)

See *Smilow Cancer Hospital* on page 2

### Smilow Cancer Hospital (in New Haven, Connecticut) Wins Green Building Award

The Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale-New Haven Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut, has secured an Award of Merit in the 2011 Green Building Design Awards awarded by Connecticut Green Building Council.

The 516,000 square foot facility has been designed by Shepley Bulfinch and developed by Turner Construction. Towers|Golde served as the landscape architects. It encompasses 14 floors housing 168 private patient rooms, 12 operating rooms, radiation therapy, as well as several integrated imaging technologies.

The building has incorporated various sustainable features which include optimum circulation of natural light in its lobbies, corridors, infusion zone as well as waiting areas to reduce energy consumption. The patient corridor in the operating suite is also illuminated by daylight. Energy usage is further slashed through installation of occupancy sensors in non-patient spaces, pumps with variable speed drives, and room pressure monitors to cut down power usage for enhanced air supply.

**The facility has upgraded air handling units (AHU) to provide improved indoor air quality comprising three filtration stages namely Merv7, Merv13, and Merv17 with the final tier consisting of HEPA filters.**

The hospital features a pressure-equalized rainscreen curtain wall system with a terracotta facade. The design makes the building durable while cutting down the need for structural steel. The rainscreen also removes trapped condensation inside the outside wall.

Other green features of the facility include use of low VOC paints and finishes, use of easy-to-clean solid-surface finishes and epoxy paints in operating rooms to combat infections effectively. In addition, the facility is fitted with terrazzo flooring in public spaces which is low on maintenance, durable and needs only water mopping.

[Smilow Cancer Hospital Wins Green Building Award](#)



*Smilow Cancer Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut*

### CBS Atlanta Gets Action for Tenants Living in Moldy Apartments

"I was desperate, disgusted and in terrible health," said Ayanna Robinson.

Robinson says it was the loneliest time in her life.

"If not for your concern I would have died and no one would have known the reason why," recalls Robinson.

Robinson lived at Cumberland Crossing, a Marietta apartment complex that our investigation uncovered was so poorly maintained that mold spores had circulated through the air ducts.

Robinson was allergic to the mold. White patches appeared on her skin and she became asthmatic along with her four children.

"I was sleeping and my body was convulsing, jerking, every pain hit me everywhere," said Robinson.

After several hospital visits doctors diagnosed the symptoms from extreme mold exposure.

Click on the following link to read the article and watch the news video:

[CBS Atlanta Gets Action for Tenants Living in Moldy Apartments](#)

See *Is Your House Making You Ill?* on page 3

## Is Your House Making You Ill?

Most of us assume that when we walk into our homes, we slam the door on exhaust, secondhand smoke, and other air-pollution ugliness. In your own house, everything is safe and clean. Oh, if only.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), levels of about a dozen common chemical pollutants are two to five times higher inside homes than outside of them. Part of the problem is that houses are so much better insulated than they used to be: That's a good thing when it comes to conserving energy, but being more airtight also means that "whatever you emit indoors — whether it's your burnt microwave popcorn, cigarette smoke, or cleaning-product fumes — is going to persist in the indoor environment for longer," says Lynn Hildemann, an environmental engineer and researcher at Stanford University.

In light of this, scientists are beginning to suspect that it may be these indoor nasties — not just outdoor smog — that are responsible for rising rates of asthma and other respiratory diseases. Indoor pollution can also cause headaches, flu-like symptoms, and, in serious cases, neurological problems.

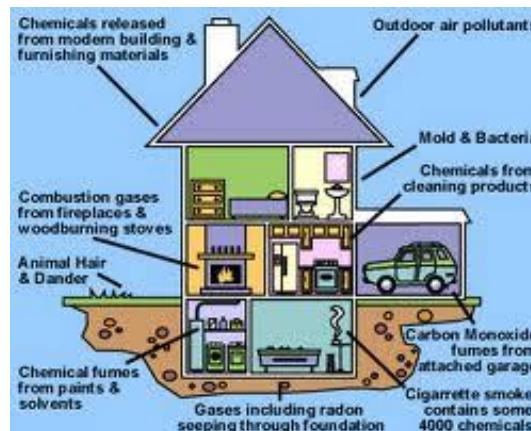
You can minimize your family's exposure with a few simple steps.

### Don't Let the Bad Stuff In

- **Kick off your shoes in the front hall.** The bottoms of our shoes are covered in a fine layer of chemicals, dirt, bacteria, and mold. That stuff settles onto floors and into carpeting.
- **Wait a few days before picking up your dry cleaning.** Freshly dry-cleaned clothes can emit chemicals that have been linked to cancer and neurological problems.
- **Go fragrance-free.** The EPA warns that some air fresheners can release compounds that cause headaches and eye, nose, and throat irritation.

### Ventilate

- **Turn on your stove's exhaust fan.**
- **Open the garage door before starting your car.**
- **Make sure your fireplace flue is working properly.**



## Is Your House Making You Ill? (cont'd)

### Tweak Your Cleaning Routine

At this point, you may be tempted to trash everything in your cabinets and run out to buy "all-natural" or "green" replacements. But you can't always believe those buzzwords.

- **Don't spray cleansers** directly on the surface you're scrubbing. Instead, spray or pour the cleaner onto a rag or paper towel first, or use pre-wet wipes.
- **Vacuum often**—ideally twice a week.
- **Don't dust or mop with dry cloths or dusters.** Use a damp cloth instead, so "the particles aren't just getting swept up into the air where you'll breathe them in as you clean"
- **Follow directions.** For example: *Use with proper ventilation.* If you use traditional cleansers, make sure to open a window.

### Simple, Safe cleansers you can make yourself.

**Drain unclogger.** Mix equal parts baking soda and white vinegar and pour down the drain. Wait two minutes and rinse with hot water.

**Toilet cleaner.** Spritz undiluted white vinegar on the edges of the bowl, scrub with a toilet brush, and flush.

**Germ killer.** Add plain old liquid dish soap to a bucketful of hot water and get to scrubbin'. Antibacterial cleaners are no better at preventing infection than regular soap and water.

### [Is Your House Making You Ill?](#)

See *Member Profile: Suzanne Bell* on page 4

## Member Profile: Suzanne Bell

My name is Suzanne Bell. I live in Averill Park, New York. I have been involved with a family business of lead, asbestos and mold remediation along with my husband and his family. We have always taken pride in the work we do and are constantly researching to make sure that what we do is to the best of our ability to make homes and businesses safe.

As an emergency medical technical and a firefighter for over 20 years, I have become very familiar with working with government agencies and regulations and dealing with health considerations.

It wasn't until October 2009 that we truly understood the dangers of environmental toxins. My youngest daughter, age 15, began to have daily issues with her asthma as well as a rash and not feeling well. She was undergoing testing for allergies to find out why she was so sick but only on certain days. This had happened for over a month when suddenly her older sister, at the age of 17, began to have a severe allergic reaction which was diagnosed as Stevens Johnson Syndrome/Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis.

I spent the entire month in the hospital with her, never leaving her side as she fought for her life through this reaction that is usually brought on by medication. Unfortunately for us, it wasn't that simple as she was an athletic, healthy, vibrant girl and she was on no medications. We struggled to find the answer which eventually was traced to an exposure to molds and bacteria.

The reaction has left her with many issues including hypersensitivity to many medications, corneal damage, severe dry eye syndrome, and body temperature regulation issues all as side effects of the SJS/TENS. Fortunately, she is a fighter and has overcome every battle that has been put in her path to try to live a "normal" life but the battle is far from over.

It is now my family's goal to educate the public on the dangers of toxic environments and to clean up as many as possible so no other family has to endure what we have to face.



*Suzanne Bell*

## South Eastern's Middle School West to Undergo Mold Cleanup

The South Eastern School District (in Pennsylvania) is spending more than \$100,000 to end a mold problem at one of its middle schools.

On the recommendation of Supt. Rona Kaufmann, the school board approved a \$112,046 contract with PROAC Corp., of Mount Aetna, Berks County, to provide remediation and detailed cleaning services at the Middle School West building, at 417 Main St. in Fawn Grove.

The project means the school will be closed for several (weeks), and all activities originally scheduled are canceled or moved to other locations.

Because the school has had problems with moisture and mold, the district has had environmental companies conducting year-round tests there for several years.

The project will involve removal of mold, dirt, grime, fungi and any contaminated materials in the building's insulation and duct work; replacement of required materials; and protective measures to ward off future contamination.

Lee Thomassen brought this to my attention.

[South Eastern's Middle School West to Undergo Mold Cleanup](#)

See *Abu Dhabi Building New Schools* on page 5



## Abu Dhabi Building New Schools with a Focus on Healthy Educational Environments and Sustainability

Demonstrating their strong commitment to sustainable development, Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (UPC) awarded today Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) the three pearl rating of the Estidama Pearl Rating System (PRS) for the design phase of 10 government schools in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The schools--the first in the Emirate ever designed to comply with the UPC's Estidama standard and the first-ever buildings in the Emirate to achieve the three pearl rating certification--are **part of Phase III of ADEC's "Future Schools Program," which is an essential part of ADEC's ten year strategic plan to transform Abu Dhabi's education system.**

H.E. Dr. Mugheer Khamis Al-Khaili, Director General of ADEC said: **"It is demonstrated that schools designed to higher levels of sustainability will not only reduce the negative environmental impact and be more resource efficient, but will also result in better student and teacher achievement** and be perceived as a benchmark example to be followed by the communities where the schools are located. When fully expressed across Abu Dhabi's society, Estidama will touch multiple facets in people daily lives and the curriculum in school is one of the most important ".

H.E. added that through the construction of these schools, the Council aspires to provide the students with healthier learning environments as it embraces infrastructure and sustainable facilities of uncompromisingly high standards to give students a whole new experience.

Commenting on these awards, His Excellency Falah Al Ahbabi, General Manager, UPC, states: "As one of the key pillars of Abu Dhabi's 2030 Vision, education plays an integral part of promoting long term sustainable development."

Al Ahbabi continues: **"By setting an example of how future schools ought to be, ADEC is taking significant steps to provide students with an ideal platform that lays down the basis for sustainable and healthy educational environments."**



## Abu Dhabi Building New Schools with a Focus on Healthy Educational Environments and Sustainability (cont'd)

Through an integrated development process, that has involved all of the project's stakeholders; the design of the 10 schools has taken a holistic sustainability approach with a particular emphasis given to four factors of prime importance for quality school design such as integrated design process, energy savings, water consumption reduction and recycling. In fact, the 10 schools have been designed - with the use of sustainable materials - to significantly reduce energy and water consumption, improve indoor air quality conditions for students and incorporate better waste management practices. **They set a new benchmark for sustainability standards of future educational institutions and will positively impact students' comfort and well-being.**

With its Future Schools Programme, ADEC is creating a healthy learning experience for all, through the development of better teaching and learning environments. **International studies have shown an association between green schools and lower student absentee rates, higher test scores and greater teacher retention.** The schools will act as model of ideal educational environments going forward, encompassing world-class sustainability-themed infrastructures and facilities built to offer students an unmatched learning experience.

[Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council Awards Three Pearl Rating to 10 New Schools](#)

## Mold Found in Six Sioux Falls Elementary Schools

Sioux Falls (South Dakota) school officials are blaming unusually high heat and humidity for the growth of mold in six elementary schools.

Discovery and R.F. Pettigrew had the most serious problem. Mold was found in about five classrooms in both schools, said Jeff Kreiter, the school district's operational services director. Small patches of mold also were found at John Harris, Mark Twain, Hayward and Harvey Dunn.

The fungi were found between Friday and Tuesday on classroom carpets and some walls. The affected areas have been cleaned thoroughly and air tests have been ordered, Kreiter said.

Kreiter said when warm air in the buildings met cold classroom floors, condensation formed and surface mold began to grow. The schools were warmer than usual because of the temperature outside but also because air conditioners were turned off during the weekend.

Some elementary schools, including Discovery, have had no air conditioning almost all summer because of cost-cutting measures.

During a July 12 school board meeting, officials with the Texas company Energy Education reported they had made changes that saved the district \$457,000 in 10 months. Those changes included turning thermostats up during warm months and closing several elementary schools during summer.

However, the mold problems were not limited to the shut-down schools. R.F. Pettigrew was one of the schools with the most damage even though parts of the school have been operating this summer.

[Mold Found in Six Sioux Falls Elementary Schools](#)

**[Next Newsletter: Friday, August 12, 2011](#)**



*R.F. Pettigrew Elementary School in Sioux Falls*

## Homeless Veterans No More

Four years ago, Michael Shindler's home was a sleeping bag under a pine tree in a park in Pittsfield, Mass. Today, the 54-year-old Air Force veteran, recovering alcoholic and mentor to at-risk kids lives just up the street, but worlds away in his own gleaming apartment. He also owns a share of the complex and has a voice in how the place is run.

His permanent digs are part of a newly constructed, think-outside-the-box center for homeless vets — the Gordon H. Mansfield Veterans Community. Opened in January, this groundbreaking approach to housing is helping end homelessness for American veterans.

Laura Mark brought this to my attention. **One of GIHN's future initiatives is to be able to create safe housing for people who are ill and have lost their homes because of mold and other contaminants, so we are always interested in learning about these innovative housing ideas.**

To read the entire article: [Homeless Veterans No More](#)

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### Quick Links

**Website:** <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

**Members:**  
<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/members>

**Health Effects:**  
[http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/health\\_effects.html](http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/health_effects.html)

**Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments**