Are Black Molds Toxic?

The term “toxic mold” is not accurate. While certain molds are toxigenic, meaning they can produce toxins (specifically mycotoxins), the molds themselves are not toxic, or poisonous. Hazards presented by molds that may produce mycotoxins should be considered the same as other common molds which can grow in your house. There is always a little mold everywhere – in the air and on many surfaces. There are very few reports that toxigenic molds found inside homes can cause unique or rare health conditions such as pulmonary hemorrhage or memory loss.These case reports are rare, and a causal link between the presence of the toxigenic mold and these conditions has not been proven. A common-sense approach should be used for any mold contamination existing inside buildings and homes. The common health concerns from molds include hay fever-like allergic symptoms. Certain individuals with chronic respiratory disease (chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder, asthma) may experience difficulty breathing. Individuals with immune suppression may be at increased risk for infection from molds.If you or your family members have these conditions, a qualified medical clinician should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment. For the most part, one should take routine measures to prevent mold growth in the home.Mold spores occur in the indoor and outdoor environments. Mold spores may enter your house from the outside through open doorways, windows, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems with outdoor air intakes. Spores in the air outside also attach themselves to people and animals, making clothing, shoes, bags, *ready roof shingles* and pets convenient vehicles for carrying mold indoors.When mold spores drop on places where there is excessive moisture, such as where leakage may have occurred in roofs, pipes, walls, plant pots, or where there has been flooding, they will grow. Many building materials provide suitable nutrients that encourage mold to grow. Wet cellulose materials, including paper and paper products, cardboard, ceiling tiles, wood, and wood products, are particularly conducive for the growth of some molds. Other materials such as dust, paints, wallpaper, insulation materials, drywall, carpet, fabric, and upholstery, commonly support mold growth.Stachybotrys chartarum (also known by its synonym Stachybotrys atra) is a greenish-black mold. It can grow on material with a high cellulose and low nitrogen content, such as fiberboard, gypsum board, paper, dust, and lint. Growth occurs when there is moisture from water damage, excessive humidity, water leaks, condensation, water infiltration, or flooding. Constant moisture is required for its growth. It is not necessary, however, to determine what type of mold you may have. All molds should be treated the same with respect to potential health risks and removal.People with allergies may be more sensitive to molds. People with immune suppression or underlying lung disease are more susceptible to fungal infections.

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