

# Update on Toxic Mold in Tampa

Last year, we wrote about mold outbreaks at the MacDill Air Force Base and the C.W. Bill Young VA Medical Center. (See our previous post "[Responding to the Mold Outbreak at VA Bay Pines Center.](#)") Just this month, [Stars and Stripes](#) and the [Tampa Bay Times](#) reported that five military families have since filed a federal class-action lawsuit "against owners and managers of private housing at MacDill Air Force Base, alleging years of negligence in persistent problems with mold throughout the buildings."

The lawsuit claims that "the Michaels Organization, the private company responsible for managing the on-base housing at MacDill, knew the houses there had mold and did not protect the health and safety of service members and their families."



(Image © Florida Middle District Court)

In one case, Jason Genrich, a chief warrant officer in the Army, developed chest pains, mood swings, dizziness, and fatigue within five months of moving into military housing at MacDill. Genrich visited four specialists before a neurologist diagnosed him as having “sick building syndrome.” For the first time in his 17-year military career, Genrich was placed on medical

deferment from physical activity.

In another unit, Air Force Staff Sargent Gary Elbron and his family had an air conditioner that was leaking water into the inside of their home. The family reported the problem to the building management company numerous times, but the air conditioner was never repaired. Water seeped under the linoleum flooring (see *image above*) leading to mold growth in the subflooring and health problems for the family.

Mold growth in many of the homes was linked to the lack of a proper vapor barrier between the first floor of the home and the outdoors, along with air conditioning units that failed to properly drain condensation away from the home. (See *our previous post* ["Reducing Mold in Your Home May Start with Your Air Conditioner."](#))

### ***Recognizing the Symptoms of Mold-Related Illness***

With toxic mold being so pervasive in Tampa, as well as a current news topic for our local area, we thought now would be a good time to review the symptoms of mold-related illness, which include the following and vary among individuals:

- Brain fog or difficulty concentrating
- Depression
- Eye irritation – watering, redness, itching, blurred vision
- Fast heartbeat, arrhythmias
- Fatigue
- Headaches or migraines
- Hormonal imbalance
- Insomnia
- Light sensitivity
- Memory loss
- Mood swings

- Night sweats
- Nosebleeds
- Numbness or tingling in face or limbs
- Pain, general or moves around
- Rashes
- Respiratory infections, such as frequent or chronic bronchitis
- Sinus infections, frequent or chronic
- Sore throat
- Unexplained weight gain
- Vivid dreaming/nightmares
- Wheezing

Some people are more susceptible than others to developing symptoms of mold-related illness, so one person in a family may experience symptoms, while everyone else feels fine. Approximately 25 percent of the population here in Florida lacks the genetically determined ability to eliminate mold toxins from their bodies. As a result, levels of toxins quickly rise to the point of causing symptoms.

### ***What to Do if You Suspect Mold in Your Home?***

If you suspect that you are experiencing symptoms of mold-related illness, we strongly encourage you to have both yourself and your home evaluated by specialists who fully understand the problem.

The first step is to treat the source of the problem. Ideally, anyone experiencing symptoms should move to a mold-free residence, at least until the mold is properly remediated. Do not try to remediate the mold yourself, because attempts to do so can significantly increase your exposure to the mold and the toxins it produces. Choose a reputable company to inspect your home and provide mold remediation, if necessary. (See *our previous post* ["10 Do's & Don'ts When Choosing a Mold Remediation](#)

[Inspection in Tampa](#)" for details.)

The next step is to have everyone in the household who is experiencing symptoms diagnosed and treated. Treatment involves detoxing to remove mold and other toxins from the body along with addressing other health issues caused by the mold, such as nutritional deficiencies, immune system dysfunction, and inflammation. Because every person's body is different and because mold affects everyone differently, we test first and then provide a personalized treatment plan for each patient.

For more about mold-related illness and what to do about it, check out our two-part series on [Living with Mold in Tampa](#) or call us at (813) 445-7770 to schedule an evaluation.

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**Disclaimer:** *The information in this blog post about mold-related illness in Tampa is provided for general informational purposes only and may not reflect current medical thinking or practices. No information contained in this post should be construed as medical advice from the medical staff at BioDesign Wellness Center, Inc., nor is this post intended to be a substitute for medical counsel on any subject matter. No reader of this post should act or refrain from acting on the basis of any information included in, or accessible through, this post without seeking the appropriate medical advice on the particular facts and circumstances at issue from a licensed medical professional in the recipient's state, country or other appropriate licensing jurisdiction.*