

Stachybotrys

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Stachybotrys Chartarum (atra)

A genus of mold that grows on water damaged materials such as ceiling insulation, wallpaper, wood, sheet rock, and can be found in dust from contaminated building materials.

If you have moisture damage and/or mold growth that is extensive, contact your city or county health department for assistance in assessing and solving the problems.

The picture on your stachybotrys page...to the right of the "about stachybotrys" page is wrong. That is chaetomium sp.

Stachybotrys is a greenish-black fungus found worldwide that colonizes particularly well in high-cellulose material, such as straw, hay, paper, dust, lint, and cellulose-containing building material such as fiber gypsum board that becomes chronically moist or water damaged due to excessive humidity, water leak, condensation or flooding. [Stachybotrys chartarum](#) grows and produces spores in the temperature range of 10-40°C (36°-104°F). It is also capable of producing several toxins, however, many researchers still do not know the temperature and moisture conditions under which these toxins are produced. It has been postulated that high-cellulose and low-nitrogen materials at a temperature range of 0-40°C can provide sufficient conditions for production of [Stachybotrys toxins](#). Surfaces exposed to air with a relative humidity above 55% and with temperature fluctuations are ideal for toxin production. Individuals with chronic exposure to the toxins produced by this fungus reported cold and flu symptoms, sore throats, diarrhea, headaches, fatigue, and dermatitis.

Clinical Information about [Stachybotrys Chartarum \(atra\)](#)

- Produces [mycotoxins](#) that can result in serious health problems
- Produces a component that paralyzes sperm at low doses
- May cause [bleeding in the lungs of infants](#) and those with weak immune systems

Many a parent has heard their budding Einstein come with the complaint "school makes me sick". Did you know that it doesn't take much in the land of office cubicles to make an employee headachy and tired, or jockeys to be so unfit they can barely get to the water fountain without being out of breath.

Dr. Berlin Nelson says it may not be all in our heads. It could be your building that's making you sick.

The culprit is a [mold](#) fungi named Stachybotrys. It is particularly likely to turn up in a house or building that has been flooded, or has sustained water damage.

"It's become notorious as a toxic mold that can cause health problems in humans and animals", says Nelson professor at North Dakota State University.

There are many microbes in the environment that produce toxic substances, but in their natural state, it's generally not a serious problem for humans. However, in the case of this particular mold, where it can be concentrated, it produces toxins that could make you sick.

Nelson thinks that public awareness of the potential problem needs to be heightened.



The Stachybotrys mold, shown in a magnified view, can cause sick-building syndrome.

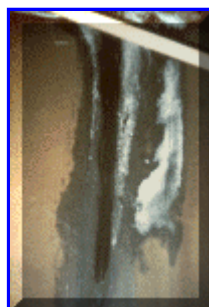
It doesn't take massive flooding either. The mold can get started from broken pipes, roof leaks, sewage and moisture condensation.

The [Stachybotrys](#) mold produces a powerful mycotoxin — *just touching it can give you a rash* — and we don't know what might be considered a safe exposure level. Many other kinds of mold fungi, including [Aspergillus](#), [Penicillium](#), and [Cladosporium](#) also produce [mycotoxins](#), some of which are identical to those produced by Stachybotrys mold.

The mold is most common on the paper covering of sheet rock but can also be found on wallpaper, ceiling paper products, carpets with natural fibers, paper covering on insulated pipes, insulation material, on general organic debris.

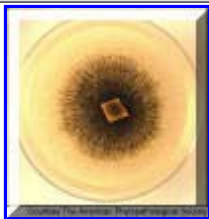
"Because leaks can occur within walls, below flooring, and above covered ceiling areas, the mold may grow profusely, but not be readily visible", says Nelson. "Homeowners and building managers need to be alert. If there has been water damage, this is something that you need to pay attention to".

This mold is a serious enough health threat that Nelson recommends only trained professionals should get rid of it.



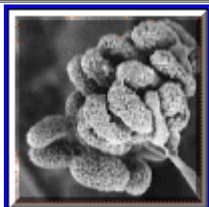
The toxic mold Stachybotrys grows especially well on water-damaged sheet rock.

(click on image to enlarge)



Stachybotrys in a petri dish

(click on image to enlarge)



Stachybotrys spores are microscopic

(click on image to enlarge)



Mold growth behind wallpaper

(click on image to enlarge)

Additional Sources of Information:

- [Facts about Stachybotrys Chartarum and other Molds](#) — CDC
- [Stachybotrys Chartarum: The Toxic Indoor Mold](#)

H & E Home

Up

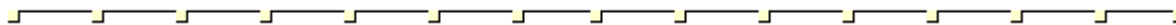
2 4 7 3 5

Here are some simple actions you can take to reduce energy costs, improve comfort, and reduce air pollution in your home or other building:

1. Use a powered exhaust system on any device that burns fuel indoors.
2. Eliminate the need for air leakage through your home's building envelope by using [mechanical ventilation](#) to supply as much fresh filtered air as you want.
3. [Seal air leaks](#) in the building's envelope to block entry of microbes, allergens, toxins, irritants, insects, and cold drafts.
4. [Insulate the walls and attic](#) as much, or more than, recommended for your local climate.
5. [Control indoor air pressure](#) to:

- a) Minimize entry of radon and water vapor from the soil.
- b) Keep insulation effective and mold-free by minimizing leakage of moist air through walls and attics that have been cooled by winter weather..

These actions will make your home a [safer shelter](#) if an accident, or a terrorist, releases chemical, biological or radiological substances upwind of your home.



Will additional energy price increases be *serious, certain and soon?* To examine the evidence, go to:

- [Association for the Study of Peak Oil & Gas](#)
- [Association for the Study of Peak Oil & Gas - USA](#)



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Please send your suggestions, comments, and questions to Jon Traudt (jtraudt@tconl.com)