

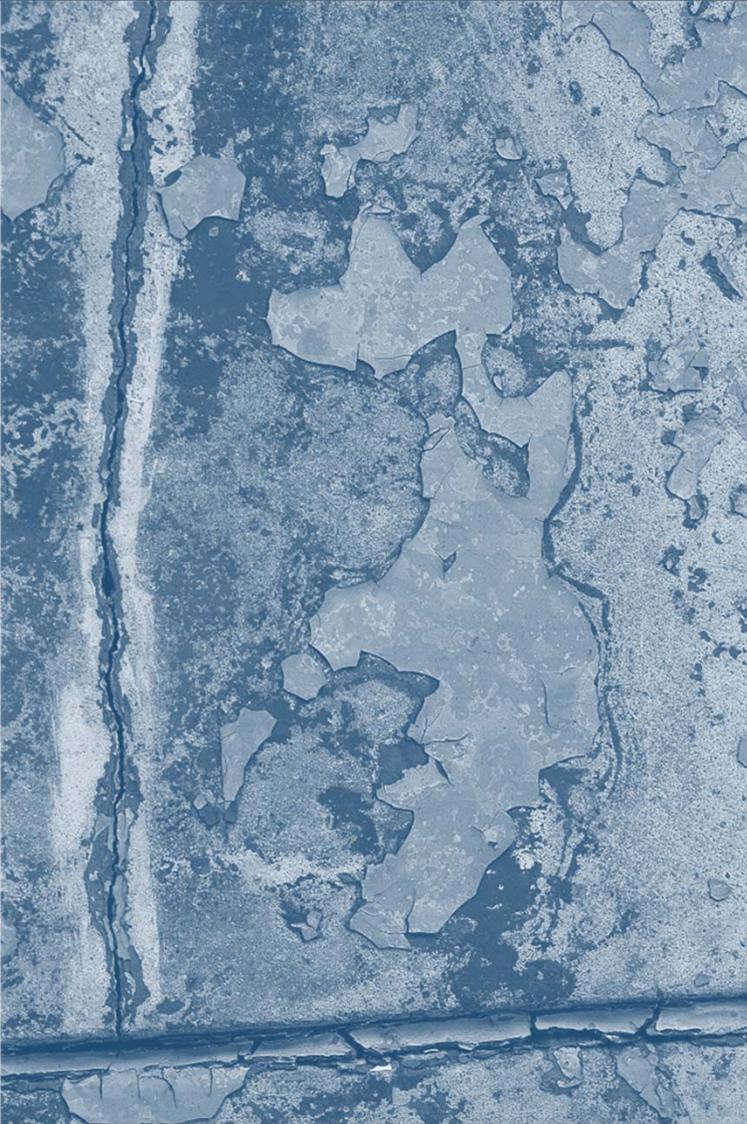
# Debunking Common Myths Regarding Mold

Leo Old, EnSafe

October, 2019

# Black Mold in the News





# Myth 1

Black mold is the deadliest type of mold.

# Black Mold



## The terms “black mold” and “toxic mold” are misleading:

- No known correlation between mold color (or mold type) and exposure effects
- Black mold - chronic building material moisture impact
- Some molds produce toxins, and the health impact of these mycotoxins varies.

# Black Mold

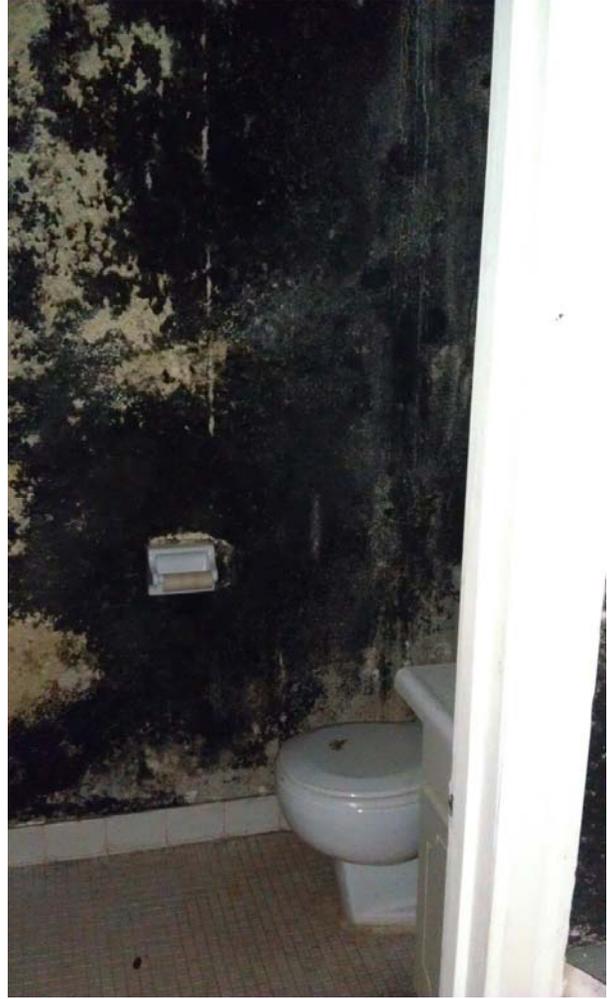
## Most Common Mold Exposure Effects:



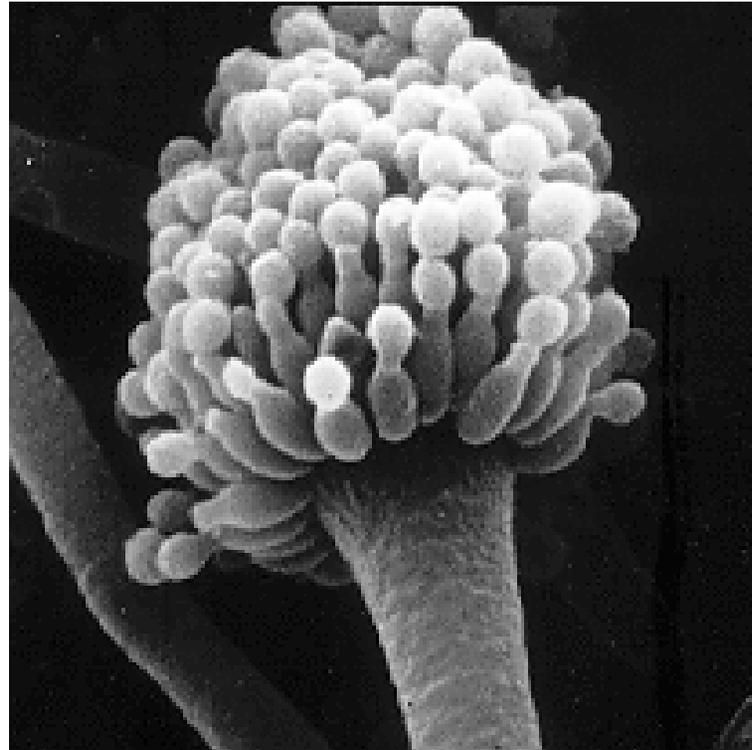
- Allergic reactions - same signs and symptoms that occur in other types of upper respiratory allergies, vary from person to person.
- Asthma may develop; can be triggered by mold allergies.
- None
- Fungal infections typically only occur when immune system is weakened.

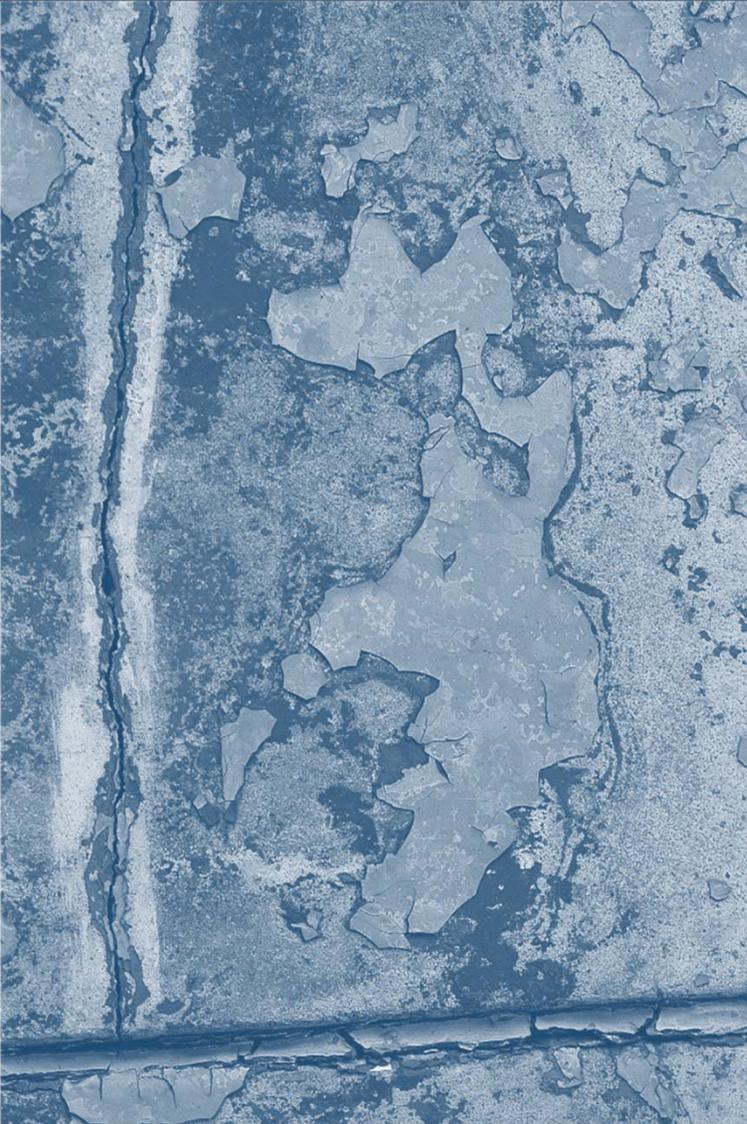
# Wallboard with “Black” Mold Prevalence





# Aspergillus





## Myth 2

My employees are complaining, but it is not an issue because its allergy season.

# Allergies & Complaints



**Maybe, but complaints often correspond with a combination of IAQ factors:**

- Allergic reactions are most common mold exposure symptom
- Normal, seasonal allergic reactions can be exacerbated by mold and/or other IAQ problems
- Symptoms related to poor IAQ vary, can easily be mistaken for symptoms of other illnesses such as allergies, stress, colds, and influenza.

# Allergies & Complaints



**Complaints often warrant some form of investigation to identify factors present:**

- Inadequate ventilation, HVAC problems, thermal comfort, air fresheners, potted plants, other chemicals
- Employee interviews, review medical records, job histories, and injuries and illnesses
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party investigation with no negative findings can provide positive impact

# HVAC Concerns



# HVAC Concerns



# HVAC Concerns

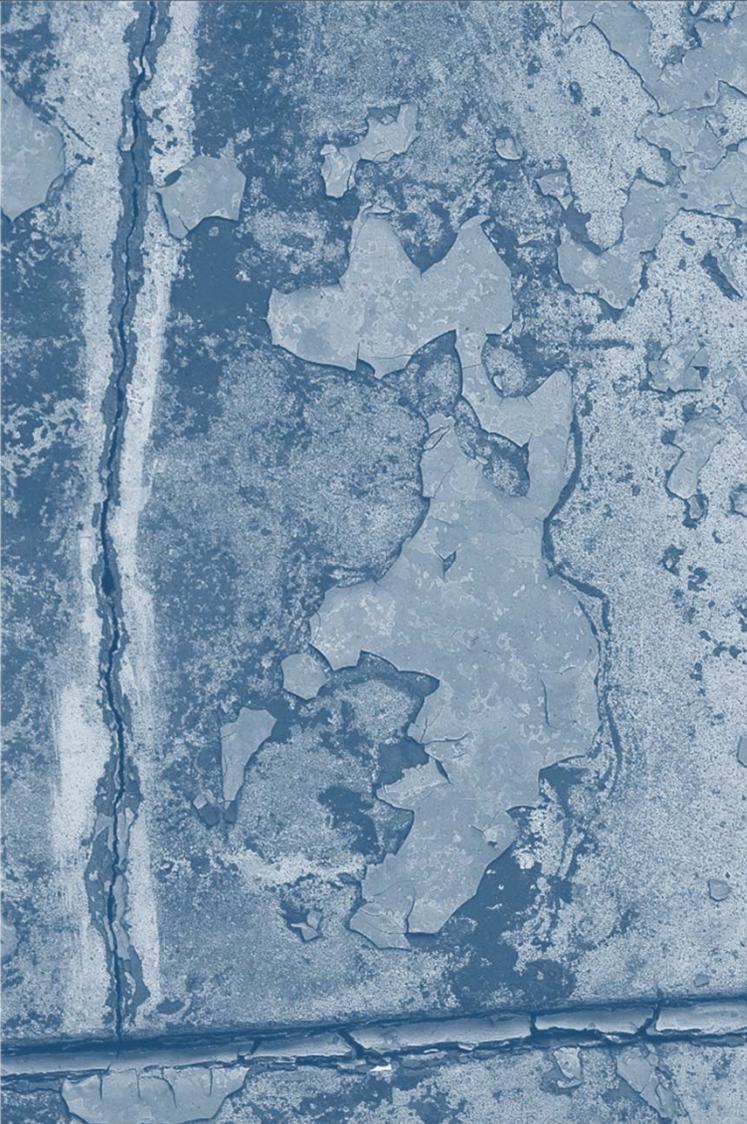


# Case Study: Academic Office Building



- 15-story office building – concerns in basement offices
- Generator exhaust located 30' from basement OA intake
- CO<sub>2</sub>, formaldehyde, VOC results acceptable
- Black dust/debris falls from the supply louver in office
- Poor maintenance of AHUs

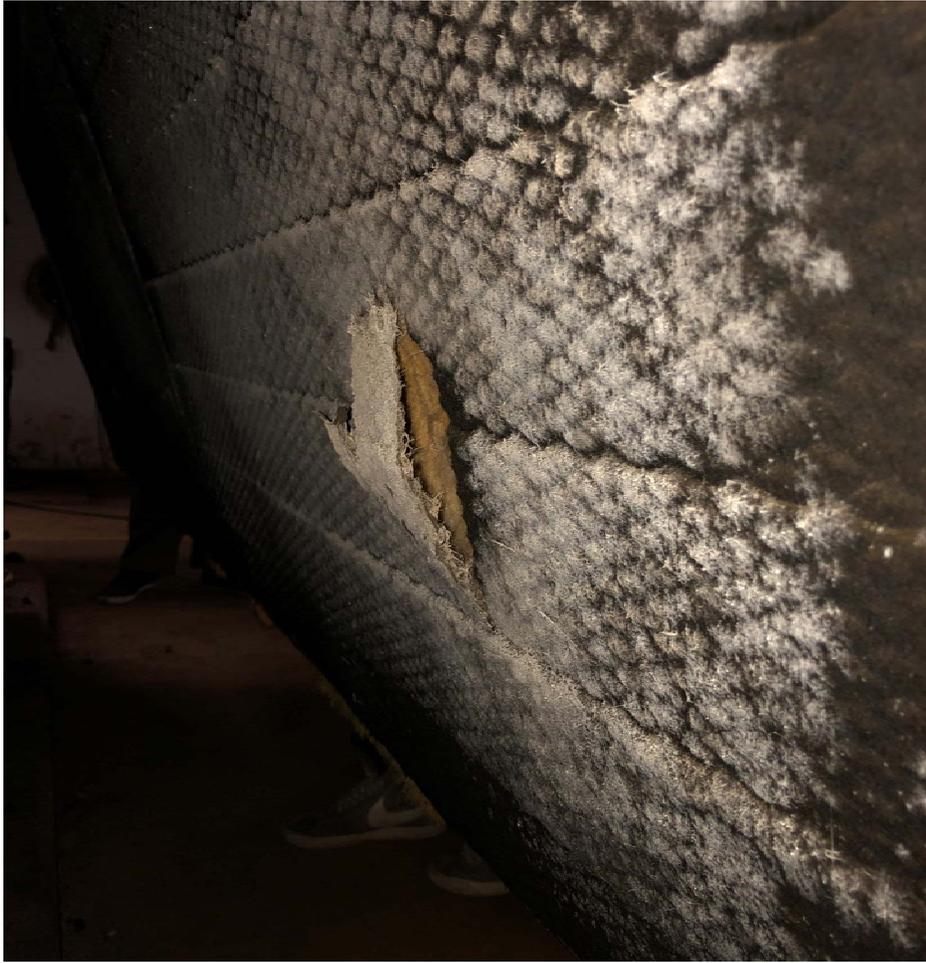




# Myth 3

No odors, no mold.







## Myth 4

I must test to identify any visible mold.

# Mold Testing and Abatement



## **Remove the mold growth and moisture source:**

- Proper mold abatement plan will remove known growth
- Priority not given to certain mold types present
- Containment of spores during abatement is crucial
- Address moisture source first

# Mold Testing and Abatement

## Reasons for “Testing”:



- Sampling may be necessary to diagnose full extent of impact and to design thorough abatement plan
- Document conditions prior to abatement
- Verify abatement effectiveness

# Water-damaged Building Materials

Remove wet absorbent items (e.g., furniture, wallboard, carpeting, etc.) if they cannot be cleaned and dried within 48-72 hours.

# Moisture Problems



# Mold Remediation

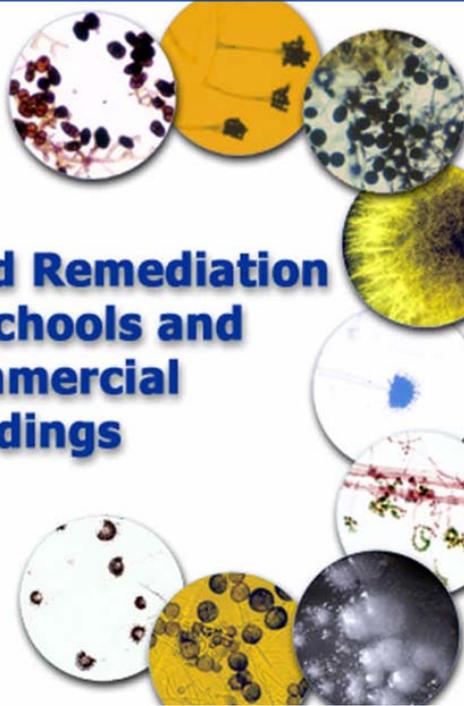




United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Office of Air and Radiation,  
Indoor Environments Division  
(6609J)

EPA 402-K-01-001  
March 2001  
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# Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings

# Resources



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U. S. Department of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
Directorate of Science, Technology and Medicine  
Office of Science and Technology Assessment

## A Brief Guide to Mold in the Workplace

Safety and Health Information Bulletin

SHIB 03-10-10

This Safety and Health Information Bulletin is **not** a standard or regulation, and it creates no new legal obligations. The Bulletin is advisory in nature, informational in content, and is intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace. Pursuant

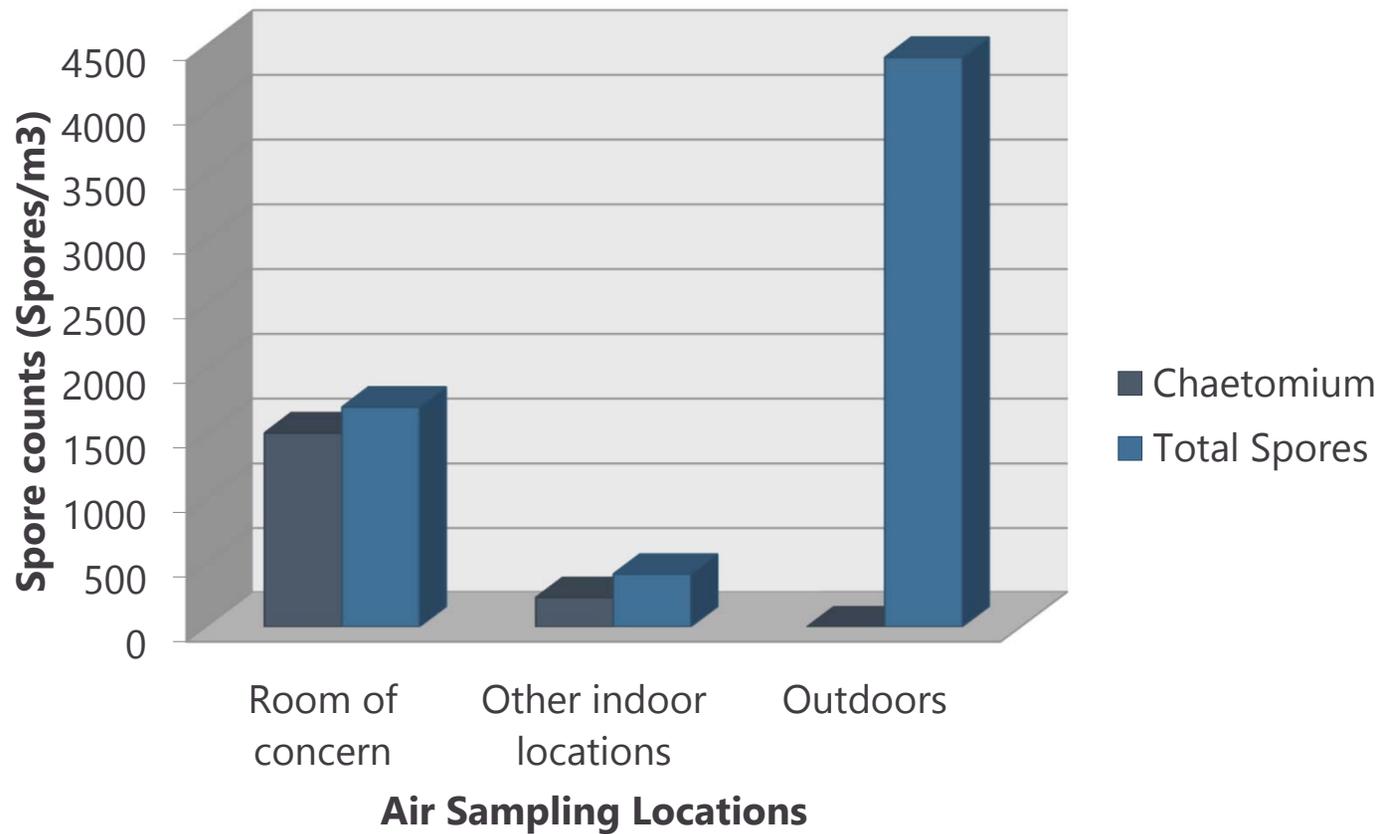
# Before You Measure or Take Samples...

- Know what question(s) you want answered
- Know how to interpret the results
- Develop a sampling plan agreed by all involved

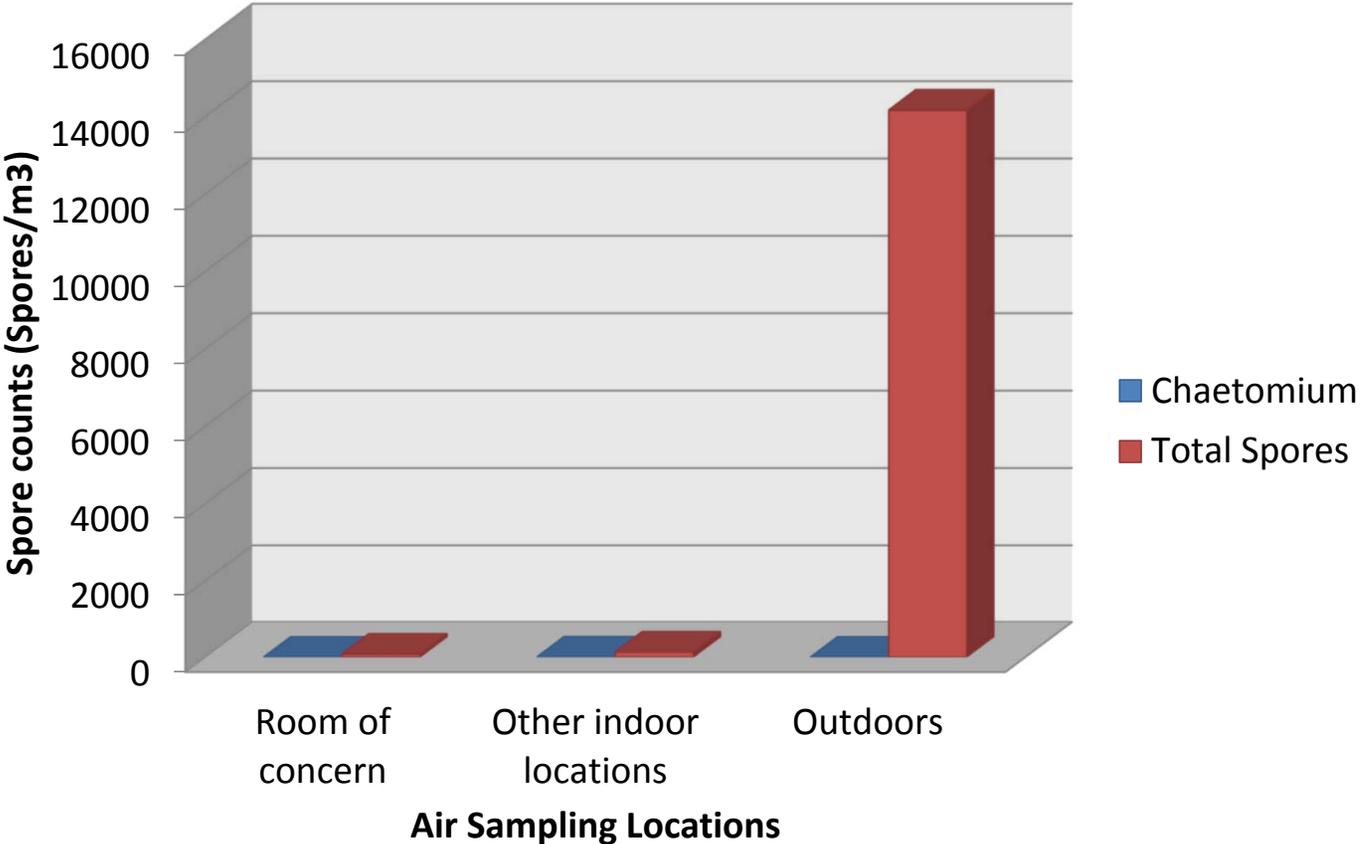
# Air Sampling to Confirm Successful Remediation



## Fungal Spore Concentration Before Remediation



### Fungal Spore Concentration After Remediation



# What Should You Do?



# What Should You Do?



# Recommendations

#1: Take complaints seriously.

# Recommendations

#2: Don't hide information from building occupants.

# Recommendations

#3: Address unexpected water events immediately.

# Recommendations

#4: Before you collect samples, know what questions you want answered first.

# Thank you

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