



**Transcript: #500 The Health Consequences of Mold and Water Damaged Buildings
with Dr. Jessica Peatross**

Dr. Wendy Myers:

Hello everyone, I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. Welcome to the Myers Detox Podcast. I'm so thrilled you are listening to the 500th episode that I have recorded. I cannot believe that I've been doing this for 10 years. I can believe it, but when I first started this show, I just really had a lot to say. I was very excited about educating people about health and I just honestly never envisioned it. I never really expected things to grow in the way that they did. I had a twinkle in my eye and had a hope and I was hoping that people would listen, and you guys have. I've had so many of you have been listening to me from the beginning or tuned in later and listening to all the episodes. Really, it's just been such a gift. I really, really enjoy doing the show.

I really enjoy and am very passionate about educating people and giving them the correct information, giving them information that they can really utilize and will really benefit from. Because I'm on this health journey too with you. I'm looking for answers. I'm looking for simple, effective, cost-effective, and a lot of things that I can do at home. I was that patient as well. I was going to people looking for answers and doctors and natural coaches and naturopathic doctors and so you name it, chiropractors, trying to figure this out. For me, I know so many of you are your own health advocate, you are advocating for your health. You want to know how to take care of your health and a lot of that you do at home, you don't do with a practitioner one-on-one always. For me, I'm just like you. I want to find things that really, really work.

I just want to tell you about what I'm learning here. I appreciate you guys tuning in every week and a lot more to come, a lot more to come. Onto the show. We're going to be talking about mold. We're going to be talking about water-damaged buildings and their health consequences with Dr. Jessica Peatross. And she really is very passionate about teaching people about mold

and some of the underlying genetic issues that make people more susceptible to mold. We're going to talk about the shocking statistics of how many water-damaged buildings there are. We're going to talk about why some people get sick from mold and other people are just fine, because mold's really everywhere, you have a damp environment with a human environment. There's mold all over the place, but some people manage just fine, and other people really become very chronically ill and incapacitated, unable to work, chronically fatigued.

We talk about why doctors aren't really looking for mold, why they're not testing for it, and why they're not looking for a lot of underlying root causes of symptoms that can really mimic other health issues. And we talk about how mold will overload the immune system, make it over active, and people get autoimmune and food sensitivities and sensitivity to supplements. They start reacting to everything and why mold does that to the immune system and just a lot of other issues surrounding mold, how to test for it, how to treat it. Really, really good show. You've got to tune in. I know you guys listening to this show are concerned about your heavy metal toxicity, and your body's burden of toxins. I created a really simple quiz you can take at heavymetalsquiz.com. Just takes a couple of minutes, you get your quiz results and you get a free series of videos that answer a lot of your frequently asked questions about detoxification. Go check that out real quick at heavymetalsquiz.com.

Our guest, Dr. Jessica Peatross, has a passion for uncovering the mystery behind chronic illness, whether that be from stealth infections, heavy metals, stress, trauma, or other environmental toxicities. She's a visionary for the future of healthcare and left her position as a board-certified internal medicine hospitalist to pursue functional medicine in order to better serve her patients by getting to the real root cause and answers for why the body might be malfunctioning. Her philosophy embraces that health encompasses the whole patient, mind, body, and spirit. Dr. Jess has become one of the most sought-after functional medicine leaders and she's known for her ability to help identify the root causes of illness, most often traced back to hidden self-infections like Lyme and parasites and mold, Dr. Jess's area of expertise.

After graduating Magna Cum Laude with a BA in biology and a minor in psychology and earning her medical degree from the University of Louisville, Dr. Jess worked as a hospitalist for six years before beginning to experience what many of her patients experience, deep anxiety, hormonal imbalances, and mitochondrial dysfunction. In the process of trying to heal herself, she sought answers to uncover the root cause of disease, something that she thought she had learned in medical school but realized that she had not. She began to investigate alternatives to today's modern medical industry that treats every illness with a pill. Dr. Jess left her position and became trained in Gerson therapy, functional medicine, nutrigenomics, and ozone therapy, and quickly uncovered that 90% of disease is the result of lifestyle, diet, and environment. The body has all the answers to heal and recover from chronic disease. She's

also gained notoriety for her kill, bind, sweat method, a tying method of using herbs, binders, and sweating to eradicate stealth infections and invaders from the body. Dr. Jess recently launched her Wellness Plus subscription app where she's helping thousands of people learn to heal themselves. You can learn more about Dr. Peatross and her wellness app at app.drjessmd.com. Dr. Peatross, thanks so much for joining the show.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Thanks so much for having me here.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yes, I'm honored to have you on my 500th episode and I'm just so thrilled that I've been doing this pretty much for 10 years. I've been doing the podcast for 10 years. I can't believe that.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Wow, that is epic, actually. 10 years. Amazing.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself, your specialty, and why you like talking about detox?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Absolutely. I started out as a board-certified hospitalist in internal medicine and I did that job for nearly seven years. I then got into, really, food as medicine and how we had more control of our health if we understood detox and how the body's detox and drainage pathways work. At that point, I really had a dichotomy on my hands because the things I was seeing in a hospital really weren't aligned with what I was feeling true health was for these chronically ill patients. I couldn't really stay and work at a job that I didn't agree with. I started not to agree with discharging patients on 30 or 40 medications, the different Coke and Pepsi contracts in the hospital, and the things that we fed these critically ill patients from the food pyramid. At that point, I decided to venture out on my own and I started to ask why until I can't ask why for my patients anymore. The bottom root cause of a lot of patients' illnesses, from what I could tell, were industrial, man made toxicities, heavy metals, and different pathogens, and then of course trauma and stress that can be continued on throughout our lives. That really led me to mold, water-damaged buildings, Lyme disease, and lots of different mystery illnesses and symptoms that people complain about yet don't have answers for.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. There are just so many things that aren't being addressed by conventional medicine. I think doctors are very well-intentioned. There's not a lot of time and there are so many things I think a lot of conventional doctors are very unhappy about but feel kind of stuck or have their hands tied. I sympathize with that and then respect practitioners that go off on their own and want something more, want to do more for their patients. Let's talk about mold. This is a big issue, makes a lot of people sick. The doctors aren't finding this, they're not looking for it, not addressing it. What's going on there? Why is this being missed and why is it so common?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: It's a great question. I think it's being missed just because we weren't really taught a whole bunch about it in school. I don't know about you, but if I remember back to my education, which seems like a long time ago now, not to call out my age or anything, we may have talked about Aspergillus, right? Something like black mold and when someone had it, it was in the bloodstream and it was really detrimental like life or death situation for a lot of people. I wasn't taught about a gradient with this or that it was common by any means. I was taught mold could cause maybe a runny nose, some allergies, and things like that for people, but not any sort of chronic illness or another sort of autoimmune label, which I now know can be true. It's really common as well. The statistic that really sticks out in my head all the time is that 80% of homes have had previous water damage and about 43 to 50% have current water damage. People don't quite understand that mold can make them critically ill, especially depending on their genes. It really slides, slips through the cracks, and is missed by the person it's affecting and their practitioner.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. It's just shocking how many buildings are water damaged or have mold or that leaky sink and people just aren't putting two and two together. You don't just walk into a home and it just automatically smells moldy. There's no kind of signal. Certainly, the house smells moldy, there's probably mold, but there's a lot of mold that doesn't smell at all. There's no real warning sign. There's no black mold on the whole wall. It goes undetected.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Exactly. I've seen a lot, actually. People can kind of get upset or offended when you say, "Hey, I think your household has water damage or mold," because they have this beautiful either renovated or newer home and it's the prize and you're telling them their home's safety has something wrong with it. It's definitely not something you guys would walk in and see on the walls or it doesn't have to be some kind of decrepit shanty to have water damage.

Dr. Wendy Myers: That's such a good point too. It doesn't have to be a shanty town, it doesn't have to be a shack to mold.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Right.

Dr. Wendy Myers: But it can be really expensive to remediate too. That's the last thing on the planet that you want to hear, that you need to do mold remediation because it's so expensive and I think it's hard to clear all that out, depending on the extent of the damage.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: It's my least favorite thing to tell patients and their families, actually, that I suspect that because, really, I actually look forward to people saying they might move because remediation is really hit or miss depending on how much the person remediating understand the detriments of mold to our health. It runs the gamut of everything.

Dr. Wendy Myers: What are some of the health conditions that are linked to mold illness? Because I'm sure a lot of these symptoms of mold illness mimic other illnesses or people are misdiagnosed or they're very subclinical symptoms like brain fog and things that just aren't really, the doctors aren't really. They're easy.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Absolutely. This is one of my favorite questions just because I think that we have a lot of labels nowadays that maybe don't exactly tell us the root cause of things and water-damaged buildings, and more than just mold, gram-negative bacteria can be in water-damaged buildings too. All these are linked to certain hormonal or neurotransmitter abnormalities which over the long term can turn into certain labels. Just to start out, you touched on things like brain fog, stuff like that, some of the more vague symptoms. There are also, we know, sleep disturbances because of disruptive melatonin, gut inflammation or SIFO, and small intestinal fungal overgrowth. There's the compromised hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis that can happen. There's disruptive vitamin D metabolism, and different hormonal imbalances like high estrogen, depending on what mold species we have, or low testosterone. Then we have Dr. Shoemaker's studies which are great about the different NeuroQuant scans that can show caudate atrophy, swelling, and enlargement of the forebrain and cortical gray matter.

Then dysfunction in even cellular metabolism, which I'm not sure about on NeuroQuant, but separately dysfunction in the cellular metabolism and mitochondrial function. We can see a lot of this to start out with. The labels later on, there are a lot of autoimmune diseases that are linked to mold or chronic inflammatory response syndrome. Things like sarcoidosis, Hashimoto's, and Graves's disease. Graves disease actually has the same susceptible genetic haplotype, which is HLATR, multiple chemical sensitivity or mast cell activation syndrome are often linked as well. POTS or postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and even lupus. Lupus also has been linked, I'm sure you know, to Lyme disease as well.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah, that's just a huge list of potential symptoms and health issues. Certainly, when you have mold, you have this, your immune system is in full fight mode and I'm sure it can become exhausted and you're more susceptible to other immune-related issues and autoimmune because your immune system just goes on.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Yes.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Overdrive trying to deal with this mold and the mold mycotoxins, the mold poop, if you will, and just creates this over-reactivity and then your sense of the foods and the supplements, and then it can just create this total metabolite chaos and over-reactivity that's just very, very difficult to live with.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Absolutely. It's like when the immune system signals there's a problem, once I could see it, the other one. As you said, it's like a complete tip-top imbalance and I often say that mold is the OG of cytokine storms. If the cytokines or

interleukin that are chemical messengers or signalers that tell, "Hey, we need to ramp up the inflammation because there's a foreign intruder, there's a problem," if they are off-kilter, our entire immune system is going to have problems dealing with any sort of outside threat.

Dr. Wendy Myers: In addition, your mitochondria as well, you get that mast cell activation syndrome where you get the cell danger response or your mitochondria just shut down energy in response to this foreign invader and you get chronic fatigue and then you're just done. You can't function at that point.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: No, honestly, you guys, I don't know this, hopefully, this isn't a terror for everyone from biology 101 or biochemistry 101, but you know have to have energy to make energy and have ATP to make lots of ATP, and if you don't even have that then you're going to shuffle over to Peruvian and lactic acid and just start having pain and just exhaustion. You definitely don't want to get into that tip-over problem with cellular health.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah, and I think that's one of those things if you have a chronic long-term illness or chronic fatigue and no one can figure out what's wrong with you, maybe do some mold testing, see if maybe that's a factor. What is the deal with some people reacting to mold and having problems with it going into chronic fatigue and pain and chronic complex illness, while other people are okay. What is going on there? Because mold is everywhere. I live in a humid environment, there's mold everywhere and what's the difference there? Why do some people get sick from it and other people don't so much?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Well, first of all, thank you for saying that mold is everywhere. Absolutely, absolutely. I think the question really is what has changed in our environment to make us react to mold or to make mold flourish more than it used to. It's really the way we're building homes, the toxic ingredients we're using, the airtight energy efficient homes where things don't flow like nature intended, flow through. On top of that, not only do we have a bunch of toxic adhesives and paint and everything else thrown about the house, we have some really sensitive individuals. About 25% of the population has a genetic haplotype known as HLA-DR. And there are different variants of HLA-DR, but it's kind of known as the canary in the coal mine haplotype. These people don't just suffer from surges or water damage buildings, they really have trouble with Lyme disease too, and even some other neurodegenerative conditions. These are the people in evolutionary times back in the day who would say, "Hey, there's something wrong with that creek water over there. Don't drink that, warrior genotype, because you're not going to feel it, but it's still going to be bad for you." They were the ones that still helped us in the community and now we live in such a toxic mess, it's really hard for these people to feel well on a day-to-day basis.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah, so many people are sick with mold illness and just floundering around from doctor to doctor and not able to figure out what's going on with them.

When you do finally figure out you have mold, what does that testing look like? How do you find out if you have mold toxicity?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Absolutely. There are a number of ways to test and I'll give you the options here and then I'll tell you, hopefully, there are benefits, pros, and cons, to each of them. Dr. Shoemaker was a pioneer in the field of water-damaged buildings and mold. But he really set the tone for what labs to check in the blood. Some of these labs are really helpful. They're usually interleukins or things like C4A, NP9, and MSH. There are a number of different immune or biomarkers that we can look at to see if mold is causing an immune disruption in the body or an imbalance in the body. If you call into some of these labs, they can add it pretty quickly, and a lot of times insurance doesn't understand why we're checking these.

It doesn't even really have mold as an ICD 10 code for people, so you're not going to be able to get a lot of this covered unfortunately. Those are kind of pricey, but they're helpful. There's another lab that you guys can look into which is a urine test and this is to test your body, not your home, both of these. The urine test is a drop-ship kit to your house. It's pretty convenient. You can take it whenever you wish. There are a couple of things you don't want to eat or take as far as supplements go before you take the test as it will skew the results. However, it's really helpful because this test shows you the byproducts of the mycotoxins that are coming out of the body. Now, the con about this test, it's relatively affordable speaking, it's about \$300.

But the problem is if you have blocked drainage pathways, so let's say you are not releasing things from your body very well, you only probably have one bowel movement every other day. You don't sweat in the sauna, the liver is struggling, and you may not release those mycotoxins into the urine like we want so your test could look better than it actually is. That's the con about that test. There's also another test called my Myco labs that looks at the immune response, or antibodies that are produced from certain mycotoxins. The con to that test is you don't actually know what species you're dealing with, you just know the body's reaction to it. Those are different examples for you guys. I honestly think the urine test is probably the most accessible and affordable for most people.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Then once you figure out what molds you have or if you have mold, what are some of the ways that you go about addressing that?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Absolutely. Well, first and foremost, I really like to be thorough. Maybe I'm too conservative, but I like to check and make sure that the molds that are, whatever we find in the person's body are also congruent with what's in their current place. I like to see if the species match up just because sometimes people can have mold in their body from previous homes and I definitely don't want them completely freaking out and worried, anxious about their current place. I like to match that up and I usually match it up with an ERMI test, an environmental relative moldy index test. This was developed by the

Environmental Protection Agency. It's not used by them, but it was developed by them. My favorite ones are real-time labs or there's a couple I really like. I also like the enviro bio mix. That test is really thorough. It looks for gram-negative, gram-positive bacteria and mold. You're kind of running everything that could possibly be wrong in a water-damaged home, and then seeing if any of those are the problem because, trust me, bacteria can also cause that brain fog and symptoms that people might have as well. Once I find that, if we begin the, I guess, prepping the body and preparing it for the detox they're going to need.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Walk us through that. Walk us through that mold detox and what that entails.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Absolutely. This can be a real journey for people, as I mentioned, depending on their genes, how long they've been in the environment that's a problem, and what other frenemies in the toxin bucket they may have going on. It all plays a role in how quickly they may get better or how much they remain sick. But first and foremost, I have to stress to people how important avoidance is. It's so hard for me to get people better if they're still around the moldy house. Especially for Genes or HLA-DR, I really want them out of the place before I even start to prep them for a detox because a lot of times their body will not behave. It's just really strong for them. If you don't have HLA-DR sometimes I can still prepare you within the house, but it's still difficult, so avoidance is key here, guys.

Next, I really want to open the detox or drainage pathways for people. It's just nicer for them and they seem to be more compliant and like me better if I prep their body beforehand. How do we do this? That means, as I mentioned a little bit earlier, I really want people to have bowel movements. One is the worst they can do in a day, and three is great as long as they're well-formed stools and they're not too loose, which indicates inflammation. I really want people sleeping restoratively every night. I really want people to be able to sweat within 10 minutes in a sauna if I put them in there. I really want people's lives going, to be able to tolerate things, and to be able to fast or maybe drink some coffee without having horrible reactions to that.

I really want people's lymphatic systems open and moving and well hydrated, when all of these are maybe not perfect but improved, we can start to say, "Okay, you could probably handle some binders, you could probably handle some sweating. You could probably handle some herbs that really help with some other co-infections that may be going on, like candida and things like this." That's really how I start to prepare people's bodies. If people are really sick, they may need prescriptions, things like cholestyramine as a binder. I usually don't take every patient there unless they're deathly ill.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Now, why is that? I've heard of cholestyramine, and how that can be really helpful. People spray that in their homes too, don't they? Or there's like a form of it that can spray. I sprayed something like that underneath my basement to try to kill all the mold in my old house which was just a shanty house in LA that

was definitely full of mold and EMF and nosema and I ran screaming from that. I sprayed that in my home. You can do that as well, can't you?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Yes, yes. I believe there is a form that can do that. I don't use cholestyramine for everyone because it can be really rough on certain people. Not everyone tolerates it properly. The other name is we'll call the brand name of it, but there are certain people who it's going to bind up their nutrition and you have to take it pretty frequently at three or four times per day, and there are other people who cause severe constipation, severe gastrointestinal distress in some people. I really am careful about binding up micronutrients, especially when people need them during this time. Sometimes I'll try a more natural binder if I think that they can do better with that.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Perfect. Yeah. Also, have you ever heard of any therapies like Rife or electronic therapies, or energetic therapies that can go in and scan for mold and target them as well?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Yes, I love a lot of energy medicines. I use them quite a bit myself. I actually have an AMP coil at my house. I have some of the necklaces that you've provided before that provide energy and rebalance the body's energetics. I love that kind of stuff. Actually, PEMF, beemer mats, rife machines, all those can be really helpful, because what I find with so many of these people is they have other pathogens on board that need to be addressed, A, and, B, their nervous system is oftentimes the culprit that doesn't let them heal fully because they've been so keen for so long in flight or fight at war with their body that they don't even realize it's insidious. They don't even realize their imbalance that way and the nervous system has to be at rest and digest to heal.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. There are a lot of people that have been sick for a long time, in pain, their lives ruined financially, and they're just so stressed. But yeah, lots of different ways to address that as well. The podcasts on stress reduction. Why don't you tell us about how someone goes about working with you, where they can find you, and what your website is?

Dr. Jessica Peatross: For sure. There's kind of a hierarchy to get to know me or work with me. I'll start at the bottom. There are a lot of podcasts I'm on. There's a lot of free information on my website, drjessmd.com. We write blogs quite often on there and they're pretty lengthy and full of information for you guys. I'm also really active on social media, so I like to educate and give a lot of information on there too because I do understand how privileged some of this medicine has become. Then lastly, I also have a membership with different tiers to it. My goal is to teach people how to understand their bodies and become their own best champion and doctor when it comes to their health and what they ask their practitioners and how knowledgeable they are. Really, I have a community forum where you can ask me and two other docs questions. We have courses and protocols, you can order the mold tests we talked about there for your home and your body. There's a vetted practitioner directory. Although I don't do

one-on-ones anymore, I do still broadcast my message and mission from that platform.

Dr. Wendy Myers: That's great you have a membership to educate people because it's true. That's why I do this podcast. You know are going to be your best advocate and a lot of people you go to, they can help you diagnose things and help you recommend certain treatments and things like that, but they can't do everything. They can't do the healthy lifestyle and set up your [Spooky2](#) Rife and address your health issues that way. There's a lot of stuff you have to do on your own, but that's great you help to guide people in your membership group.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Well, Dr. Jess. Yeah, and you also spoke on my heavy docuseries as well, and thank you so much for participating in that. I have a docuseries coming up in late 2023 and I'll let you know exactly when it's coming out as well. It's called Heavy and I interviewed 80 speakers from around the world, experts in heavy metal and chemical toxification and detoxification and how these toxins are affecting our weight, how they're affecting our blood sugar control, promoting diabetes, and promoting hormone issues, brain health issues. It's really a wealth of education and solutions and a message of hope as well. I know a lot of people are struggling out there with their bodies and I really want to educate people on what are these underlying root causes that are causing us to have these symptoms and struggling with our weight and other health issues. Dr. Jess, thanks so much for coming on the docuseries and also-

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Yeah.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yes, and thank you so much also for coming on the Myers Talks podcast.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: I'm honored to do both. I'm really excited for the docuseries. You guys get on that and let me know. I'm happy to promote it. I'm honored to be on both.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Yes. Yeah. Well, thanks so much Dr. Jess for coming on the show and, everyone, I'm Dr. Wendy Myers. Thanks so much every week for listening. Again, this is the 500th episode and I am absolutely thrilled, broadcasting live from my bedroom here in Playa del Carmen. I just don't have a better setup right now. I'm at a temporary rental. But again, thanks for sticking with me and listening to so many of my episodes. I know some of you who have listened to all of the shows.

Dr. Jessica Peatross: Wow.

Dr. Wendy Myers: Thanks for your loyalty and for sticking with me at the last 500 shows and many more to come. I've got a lot to say, a lot more topics I want to cover. A lot old, I beat a dead horse, also a lot of old issues that I want to keep harping about the need to detox. Thanks for tuning in and I'll see you guys next week.