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## ***Facts About Stachybotrys Chartarum (Atra)***

- *Stachybotrys chartarum (atra)* is a type of greenish-black fungus. Fungi are common in nature and serve an important role as agents that break down matter. They contain fragments, or spores, which are found in virtually every building and every home.
- *Stachybotrys* grows on material with a high cellulose and low nitrogen content, such as fiberboard, gypsum board, paper, dust and lint, that becomes chronically moist or water-damaged due to excessive humidity, water leaks, condensation, water infiltration or flooding.
- Under specific environmental conditions, *Stachybotrys* may produce several toxic chemicals called mycotoxins. These chemicals are present on the spores and the small fungus fragments that are released into the air. Because *Stachybotrys* spores are very small, some may be drawn into the lungs when airborne spores are inhaled.
- In studies conducted in North America, *Stachybotrys* has been found in two to three percent of home environments sampled. Typical symptoms of prolonged mold exposure include respiratory problems such as wheezing and difficulty breathing; nasal and sinus congestion; burning, watery or red eyes; blurry vision; cough; sore throat; skin irritation; central nervous system problems, including headaches, memory loss and mood changes; aches and pains; and fever.
- Infants may be particularly susceptible to the effects of inhaled mycotoxins associated with *Stachybotrys* because their lungs are growing very rapidly. There is currently no method to test humans for toxigenic molds such as *Stachybotrys* or mycotoxins.