
The Mycotoxin Avoidance Diet

How to reduce mold toxins in your food & drink



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Chapter One

Why A Low Mycotoxin Diet?

The Canary In The Coal Mine

Hi, I'm Shannon. I am writing this eBook because learning to navigate a low mold-mycotoxin diet was an important component of my healing from multiple autoimmune and chronic diseases.

I suffered health issues for 30 years. I have been diagnosed with systemic lupus, fibromyalgia, endometriosis, narcolepsy, autoimmune hypothyroid, Stage 3 Adrenal Fatigue (HPA axis dysregulation), gastroparesis, ischemic colitis, gastritis, IBS, asthma, allergies, lyme disease, restless leg syndrome, period leg movement disorder, chronic EBV, psoriasis, gall bladder dysfunction and more. In 2014, my Lupus was progressing and I was fearful of dying from mounting complications.

So I made a dramatic change in all aspects of my life in August 2014. I adopted an autoimmune eating protocol (The Wahls Protocol and The Bulletproof Diet), I started seeing a functional and integrated medicine doctor, I discontinued my career and completed 2 life coaching certifications and 2 health coaching certifications, and I read 60 health books. I made dramatic changes in every aspect of my mental, spiritual, emotional and physical life. But there was a piece of the puzzle missing that I could not put my finger on.

And then during my Bulletproof coach training course, I started learning about how mold toxins, or mycotoxins, in food can negatively impact your health. And I realized that I had always had an environmental sensitivity to mold. So, could it be that mold toxins or mycotoxins in my diet were the missing piece to the puzzle? Well, it turns out that it was.

And so began my three plus year journey into learning how to minimize mold toxins in my diet. As it turns out, I am the "canary in the coal mine" when it comes to mycotoxin: one sip of moldy coffee or one shake of moldy spice is all it takes to flare my autoimmune and set off brain fog, joint pain, headaches, and muscle weakness for days. So when I learned to navigate around mold toxins, my health dramatically improved.

There are very few resources out there about mold and food. The Bulletproof diet is designed to minimize mold toxins in the diet, which is where I started. But I haven't found the exact resource out there that I would have liked to have had in 2014 to help me navigate these waters. So I created one. And here it is.

DISCLAIMER

This is a resources and is not a scientific paper or study. This guide simply shares my experience in learning to successfully reduce mold toxins in my food. This is a resource built upon my own experience, as well as from scouring the internet and medical journals for three years for ways to avoid mycotoxins in food. I am not a medical professional. I'm just your average crazy person who is desperate and determined to claw my health back from the abyss and regain perfect health. Read this eBook at your own peril. If you believe what I say, that's on you, as I've already stated that I'm a crazy person. How's that for a disclaimer?

A quick word on environmental mold: this eBook is specifically to help you avoid or reduce mycotoxin exposure in your food and beverages. I feel that there are already great resources out there if you need information on environmental mold exposure, remediation, or recovery. Please see [Chapter 7: Resources to Learn More](#) for great existing resources.



Chapter Two

The Journey Begins

The Bulletproof Diet

My big “A-HA” came reading the book *The Bulletproof Diet* by Dave Asprey. What I love about the *Bulletproof Diet* is that it focuses on maximizing nutrients AND minimizing anti-nutrients in the diet. In *The Bulletproof Diet* book, Dave talks about the major anti-nutrients in our diet being Lectins, Phytates, Oxalates, and Mold Toxins, or Mycotoxins.

Mold Toxins

The *Bulletproof Diet* book says,

“Most people are exposed to chronic low doses of mold toxins in every single meal, but they are invisible and particularly hard to identify. The more mold mold toxins you eat, the more damage they do over time”

Also from *The Bulletproof Diet* book,

“Besides coffee, the main sources of mold toxins in your diet are wheat, corn, and other grains, but peanuts, fruits, chocolate, and wine are often tainted with mold toxins, too.”

He goes on to say that animal products from grain fed animals can have more concentrated mold toxins than the grain itself. Another great reason to eat grass-fed, pastured, or wild-caught protein and avoid grain fed products.

A final note from Dave is that mold toxins are sneaky because one bag of coffee beans or nuts may be fine but the next bag of the same brand of coffee or nuts can be high mold toxin. And you can't see or smell them or test them with a home device. So, what do you do? Well, a great place to start is to buy the *Bulletproof Diet Book* and read it and follow the *Bulletproof Diet Road Map*. This eBook simply takes a deeper dive into my experience navigating foods and specific foods and food brands that are most likely to be low or high mold toxin. Because I truly am the “Canary In the Coal Mine” when it comes to having an immediate and significant reaction to mold toxins in food, I wanted to share my experience to help others.

Chapter Three

What are Mycotoxins?

Well, to be sure, this is where my knowledge is limited. I am not a scientist and my understanding of the science of mycotoxins is limited. I simply know when I ingest them. So what follows is a practical guide to help you avoid mold toxins in food. But I did want to include some brief background information, so for that, I interviewed by good friend Google. So take it with a chunk of salt. See **Chapter 7: Resources to Learn More** for articles discussing mycotoxins, genetic testing, mycotoxin symptoms and environmental mold.

Types of Mold Toxins in Food

“Mycotoxins are poisonous chemical compounds produced by certain fungi. There are many such compounds, but only a few of them are regularly found in food and animal feedstuffs such as grains and seeds. Nevertheless, those that do occur in food have great significance in the health of humans and livestock. Since they are produced by fungi, mycotoxins are associated with diseased or mouldy crops, although the visible mould contamination can be superficial. The effects of some food-borne mycotoxins are acute, symptoms of severe illness appearing very quickly. Other mycotoxins occurring in food have longer term chronic or cumulative effects on health, including the induction of cancers and immune deficiency.” -From the resource *FAO Corporate Document Repository*

Common Mycotoxins in Grains	From FAO Corporate Document Repository
deoxynivalenol/nivalenol	wheat, maize/corn, barley
zearalenone	Grain: wheat, maize/corn, barley, rice, oats, sorghum and can travel up the chain to grain-fed meat, eggs, dairy and beer
ochratoxin A	barley, wheat, and many other commodities
fumonisin B1	maize/corn
aflatoxin B ₁ , B ₂	maize/corn, peanuts, and many other commodities
aflatoxin B ₁ , B ₂ , G ₁ , G ₂	maize, peanuts

Reference for information on this page: <http://www.fao.org/wairdocs/x5008e/x5008e01.htm>

Mold Toxin Literature Search

Most Commonly Cited High Mycotoxin Food & Beverage
Alcoholic Beverages
Barley
Corn
Cottonseeds
Dried Spices
Figs
Grain and Quinoa
Hard Cheese
Milk
Nuts
Peanuts
Rye
Sorghum
Soybeans
Sugar Beets
Sugar Cane
Wheat

Chapter Five

The Low Mycotoxin Diet

General Guidelines

1. Wash all produce in Grapefruit Seed Extract or Baking Soda. I personally use NutriBiotic GSE Grapefruit Seed Extract Liquid Concentrate. You can place 1-2 drops on product like apples or zucchini and rub all over then rinse. Or for produce like berries or broccoli, place several drops in a bowl of water and wash produce. I have not found vinegar to be anywhere near as effective as Grapefruit Seed Extract in washing produce.
2. Buy only fresh whole nuts. Ground nuts or nut pieces and soaked or sprouted nuts will be moldier.
3. Buy small containers of spices and store in the freezer. Replace every 3 months. Replace cinnamon every month. Avoid black pepper, paprika, cinnamon sticks and all nutmeg. See my preferred spice brands under resources. Use only ground white pepper.
4. Use fresh products and replace every 3 months, including honey, baking soda and baking powder.
5. Avoid buying anything in bulk bins, especially grains, beans, nuts, or spices. Mycotoxins are often in the bins.
6. Do not save food for more than 24-48 hour max. For example, if you open a can of coconut milk or pumpkin puree and don't use it all, store it in a closed mason jar in the refrigerator for no more than 24-48 hours.
7. If you breathe mold, wash sinuses with baking soda mixed with water immediately.
8. If you ingest mycotoxins, take Bulletproof Activated Coconut Charcoal, Zeoforce Zeolite, Bentonite Clay, and/or topical glutathione and get in a sauna or sweat. I carry charcoal and Zeolite with me everywhere.
9. Buy Bulletproof brand Coffee/Decaf, Vanilla Powder, Chocolate Powder, and Collagen Protein Bars. Bulletproof is the only company I know that tests for mycotoxins. In 3 years, I have never been "mold bombed" by a Bulletproof product.
10. Eat fresh foods. Packaged foods are high mycotoxin in general. In you purchase baking soda, baking powder, baking flour or baking mixes, rice, crackers, or anything in a package, consume quickly. Do not leave it in the pantry for months. And certainly after you open it, don't leave it in the pantry for months!

Food and Beverages to Avoid

This is a general guideline on High Mycotoxin Foods and Beverages. For specific foods and brands that you can consume, please see the next Chapter called Resources & Recommendations

Red=Avoid Orange=Recommended to Avoid Yellow=50/50 Chance Green=Usually ok

Most Common High Mold Toxin Foods & Beverages in General
Alcoholic Beverages especially red wine or grain based alcohol
Barley
Cheese & Hard Cheese
Chocolate, especially powder
Coconut, Dried
Coconut oil see exception in Resources; MCT oil is often ok, Coconut milk in a can is often ok
Coffee regular and decaf, see exceptions in resources
Corn
Cottonseeds
Dried Fruit, Newman's Own Organic Raisins are ok
Extracts with alcohol, such as vanilla
Fermented food, kombucha, vinegar foods
Figs
Grain and Quinoa
Honey - be sure it is fresh and newly open , see resources
Maple Syrup - be sure its fresh and newly open
Milk and Milk Products
Mushrooms, fresh are sometimes fine
Nuts especially soaked and sprouted, almonds, and cashews

Most Common High Mold Toxin Foods & Beverages in General
Peanuts
Quinoa
Rye
Seaweed
Seeds especially soaked and sprouted
Sorghum
soybeans
Dried Spice especially nutmeg, black pepper, paprika, cinnamon
Sugar Cane
Sugar Beets
Tea especially in tea bags, fresh, loose tea is sometimes ok
Tigernuts consume immediately. They will mold unopened or opened very quickly if not already moldy upon purchase
Vanilla especially extract
Wheat
Wheatgrass
Water especially tap water, filtered water when a tank or vessel is being used to store the water, or plastic bottled water, see exceptions
Yeast all types
Vinegar especially balsamic and red wine

Basically, boxed and packaged foods are most problematic. Always eating fresh produce and fresh protein is best. Keeping anything on the shelf for long periods of time, from oil to spices to vinegar to baking goods will eventually result in mycotoxins. So for example, even though I list Bragg Apple Cider Vinegar as low mycotoxin, if it stays open in the fridge for months on end, it will get mycotoxins. So I buy small sizes of spices and products and use them up in a timely manner. The fridge and freeze will slow mycotoxins but they won't stop them.

Food and Beverages to Eat

Recommended Foods and Brands

Bacon: Pederson Farms, Applegate Organics,

Baking: Bob's Red Mill Baking soda and powder

Bone Broth: US Wellness Meats (Grassland Beef) or Epic (my experience with Kettle & Fire was not good)

Bulletproof MCT oil, XCT or Brain Octane

Bulletproof collagen bars and bites

Bulletproof madagascar vanilla powder

Bulletproof cacao

Bulletproof chocolate powder

Bulletproof coffee and decaf

Butter: Anchor, Kerrygold, Pure Indian Foods Ghee, Ancient Organics Ghee, Bulletproof Ghee

Chocolate: Bulletproof Chocolate Powder and Lily's bars and chips

Coconut Flakes: Let's Do Organic Brand

Coconut oil : **Tropical Traditions Gold Label****

Coconut milk: Native Forest

Coffee: Bulletproof Decaf and Regular

Collagen Protein, Bulletproof or Vital Proteins

Cooking fat: lard, tallow, ghee (see butter), sustainable/responsible palm shortening from Nutiva

Crackers: Jilz Paleo Crackers or Mary's Gone Crackers

Dried Spice: McCormick's organic, Simply Organic or Frontier Co-op Organic

Fish: VitalChoice canned fish

Olive Oil: <u>Bragg</u>
Milk: use coconut milk from <u>Native Forest</u>
Grain: use <u>Bob's Red Mill</u> Gluten Free Grains like UNBLEACHED almond meal, hazelnut flour, sorghum, corm meal, oat flour, teff, GF all-purpose baking flour, Paleo Flour, tapioca, arrowroot, potato starch, coconut flour, white rice four (do not use potato flour or blanched almond flour)
Rice: <u>Alter Eco</u> organic jasmine rice, <u>Lotus Foods</u> organic jasmine rice and white rice noodles
Snacks: <u>Epic</u> bars and trail mix, <u>Bacon's Heir Pork Clouds</u>, <u>Brad's Raw Kale Chips Naked</u>, <u>Bulletproof</u> bars and bites, <u>Bubba's Find Foods</u> Snack Mix and Granola (all GF)
Sweetener, use fresh local honey, <u>Wholesome Coconut Sugar</u>, <u>Wholesome Zero Calorie Free Sweetener</u>, or <u>Sweet Leaf</u> stevia
Water, use a refrigerator filter or bottled water or mineral water in glass like <u>Topo Chico</u>, <u>San Pellegrino</u>, <u>Perrier</u>, or <u>Panna</u>, *****
Vinegar, <u>Coconut Secret</u> Coconut Vinegar and <u>Bragg</u> Apple Cider Vinegar

Of course, I have not tried every brand of every product on the market. For some things like coffee, I have tried countless brands from across the US - from Seattle/Portland to Austin to NYC/Brooklyn - and so far only Bulletproof brand coffee and decaf is consistently low mycotoxin.

I have also tried countless brands of coconut oil and all are consistently high mycotoxin with one exception: **Tropical Traditions Gold Label is made from FRESH coconut not dried coconut. It is the only brand that uses fresh coconut, and only the GOLD label. I used it for 3 years (large plastic buckets) with no issues. Twice I ordered the small glass jars and had mycotoxin issues. So I typically never use coconut oil. But if I do, I only use Tropical Traditions Gold Label, although it is not a 100% safe bet.

For other products like rice, coconut milk, olive oil or collagen protein, I have not tried a wide variety of brands so I can't say what other brands might be recommended.

The sickest I have even been was from nutritional yeast, sprouted watermelon seeds, and wheat grass so you just have to beware of moldy dried goods and grasses.

Chapter Six

Resources to Learn More

“Mold spores will cause some trouble, but mycotoxins are like a bullet with molds as the gun. Mycotoxins are much worse.”

- Dr. Andrew Campbell

Dr. Andrew Campbell and the effects of exposure to mycotoxins

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=7y8ki8Zbtqg

Top 11 Ways to Beat Toxic Mold In Your Home and Life

<https://blog.bulletproof.com/top-11-ways-toxic-mold/>

How Your House Can Make You Weak

<https://blog.bulletproof.com/how-your-house-can-make-you-weak/>

Moldy The Movie – The New Bulletproof Documentary

<https://blog.bulletproof.com/moldy-movie-coming-soon/>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI0_azQv6N8

The Science Behind Just One Mold Toxin in your Coffee

<https://blog.bulletproof.com/one-ugly-mug-the-science-behind-just-one-mold-toxin-in-your-coffee/>

The Hidden Dangers of Toxic Mold - Dave Asprey #60

<http://www.danielvitalis.com/rewild-yourself-podcast/the-hidden-dangers-of-toxic-mold-with-dave-asprey>

Our Moldy World Part 1: Mycotoxins

<https://blog.bulletproof.com/mycotoxins-in-america/>

11 Foods Highest in Mycotoxins

<https://oawhealth.com/2014/06/10/11-foods-highest-in-mycotoxins>

Aflatoxin: How to Avoid this Common-Food Carcinogen

<https://draxe.com/aflatoxin/>

Toxic effects of mycotoxins in humans

[http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/77\(9\)754.pdf](http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/77(9)754.pdf)

Things That Plague Us: Mold and Mycotoxins

<http://mthfrliving.com/health-conditions/mold-mycotoxins/>

CIRS: the genetics

<http://www.survivingmold.com/news/2014/12/cirs-the-genetics/>

Surviving Mold

<http://www.survivingmold.com>

Mycotoxins

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC164220/>

MomsAWARE of Mold and Mycotoxins

<https://momsaware.org/aware-mold-mycotoxins.html>

<https://momsaware.org/mold-testing.html>

https://momsaware.org/images/stories/documents/rosetta_stone_instructions.pdf

Avoiding Mold: Genetic Testing for Mold Sensitivity - The HLA-DR Gene

<https://www.avoidingmold.com/single-post/2017/01/17/Genetic-Testing-for-Mold-Sensitivity---The-HLA-DR-Gene>

Fungal mycotoxins in foods: A review

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311932.2016.1213127>

The Top-10 MYCO-Toxic Foods

<http://www.vsan.org/pdf/Top-10-mycotoxins.pdf>

The Low Mold Diet

<https://www.jillcarnahan.com/2015/02/08/low-mold-diet>

Is Toxic Mold Exposure the Cause of Your Symptoms?

<https://www.jillcarnahan.com/2015/02/08/toxic-mold-exposure-cause-symptoms/>

Mold-Survivor: Symptoms of Fungal Exposure (Mycotoxicosis)

<http://www.mold-survivor.com/symptoms.html>

A Beginner's Guide to Mold Avoidance: Techniques Used by Hundreds of Chronic Multisystem Illness Sufferers to Improve Their Health

<https://www.amazon.com/Beginners-Guide-Mold-Avoidance-Multisystem-ebook/dp/B00YIAS6MC>

Chapter Seven

FAQ

I thought you might ask

So what do you eat?

I follow a Wahls Protocol-Bulletproof diet. I focus on eating (1) 6-9 cups of fresh produce each day (2) plus grass-fed beef/pastured pork/or wild-caught seafood and (3) healthy fat to satiety like avocado, olive oil, or animal fat. I eat coconut milk, fruit, and fresh nuts and seeds in moderation. And occasionally organic white rice. To learn more, I recommend both The Wahls Protocol by Dr. Terry Wahls and The Bulletproof Diet by Dave Asprey. Eating healthy fresh, whole foods was the foundation of my healing from 6 autoimmune diseases including Lupus. To learn more about my journey and for daily recipes that are autoimmune friendly and low-mold, see Chapter 8: How to Find Me or visit my website at www.autoimmunefoodie.com

But isn't there mold on everything, including my produce?

Yes, true. But it is important to remember that we are not talking about mold being dangerous. We are talking about a secondary metabolite of mold, or mold poisons called mycotoxins. So the mold on your cauliflower is not as toxic as the mold toxin in your corn. This is an important distinction.

Does this really matter? I don't feel sick when I eat these foods!

Yes, true. But there are a few things to know here. First, when you ingest small amounts of poison daily, you habituate to the effects so they are hidden. Only when you avoid the poison for an extended period (30-90 days) will you detect big effects. Second, its true that it is the dose that makes the poison. Ingesting small amounts of poison over time is cumulative and can be devastating. Think smoking or breathing asbestos for years. Would you inhale a small amount of asbestos daily? Finally, you may or may not be the one of the 25-30% of people super sensitive to mold, but that does not mean its ok to ingest it daily for years. It is still a toxin diverting your body energy to detox instead of healing, repair, and digestion.

This is frustrating! Do I really have to avoid these foods?

Well, you should. Just because you don't want there to be toxic mold poisoning your food doesn't mean it isn't. Mycotoxins are in your food, that's a fact. So we must all make a choice:

we won't worry about it or we will try to avoid them as much as possible. It's ok if you choose to consume them. As Dave Asprey of Bulletproof says, it doesn't make you a bad person. There is no #mycotoxinshaming here. But if you want to avoid this toxin that will have a cumulative impact on your health and resilience, this information is being freely shared because I am passionate about my health and your health.

This overlaps with many other protocols. If I feel better, how do I know it was mycotoxin avoidance?

You don't. But if you feel better because you lowered carbs or minimized other anti-nutrients, it's a win!

How do I determine if I have an issue with mold and need this diet without expensive tests?

Simple - just try it for 90 days. Did you feel better? Then you needed it.

But don't I need grains for fiber and health?

Nope. You don't need grains for a healthy diet. The foundation of a healthy diet is 9-12 cups of vegetables per day including color, sulfur and leafy greens; wild-caught, grass-fed, pastured protein; mineral water and healthy fats such as grass-fed animal fat, olive oil and avocados. Add some coconut milk, low mycotoxin nuts or seeds, and fruit in moderation and you are set.

Where can I find low mold toxin recipes and more?

See next Chapter: How to Fine Me!

Who should try a low mycotoxin diet?

In my opinion, anyone who has been exposed to environmental mold, has a known or suspected mold allergy or sensitivity, anyone with an infection or chronic illness such as Lyme disease, or anyone with an autoimmune disease who is on an autoimmune protocol and is still reacting to foods might want to consider trying the low mycotoxin diet.

Chapter Eight

How to Find Me

Follow me for low mycotoxin recipes plus biohacking, coaching, and health tips



Instagram @autoimmunefoodie

Facebook page: [Autoimmune Foodie](#) and [The Low Mycotoxin Diet](#)

<https://www.austinmusclerestoration.com/total-health-restoration>

<https://www.autoimmunefoodie.com>

