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Home: Toxic Mold

Go to the Dogs?

NEWSWEEK

June 9 issue — What's that, Lassie? Timmy's been inhaling toxic mold?! Firms nationwide are now offering mold-sniffing dogs they say detect hazardous spores lurking behind walls or beneath your floorboards—for about \$500 a visit. Is it a scam?

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION Agency doesn't endorse such services, but there's a growing consensus that the animals do detect the 18 sickness-causing mold strains. "It's kind of funky, but it seems to be working," says Kristy Lee, of the independent, nonprofit Indoor Air Quality Association. And, compared with the \$2,000 it would take to analyze air samples, it's a relative bargain. But that doesn't mean we should all run out and rent a pooch. Despite all the hoopla and hysteria about toxic mold, no one's sure how common it is. Unless your house seems to be causing allergy like symptoms, you're probably better off following the EPA's advice: make sure there are no water leaks, and keep indoor humidity low.

—*Brian Braiker*

The Tip Sheet

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