

TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

Old hay harbors mold

By Paul G. Donohue, M.D.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: Please tell me the treatment for, and all you know about, allergic bronchopulmonary **aspergillus**. — R.W.G.

DEAR DR. DONOHUE: My husband, who is 45, comes down with terrible wheezing and shortness of breath. Our doctor feels sure he is allergic to the hay in our barn. He advises us to either keep him out of the barn or clear out the old hay, which he says is the cause. Have you run into this problem? — Mrs. O.N.

THE **ASPERGILLUS** MOLD occurs widely in nature: in soil, in water, and in decaying vegetation.

For some, especially those who already have asthma, inhaling spores of this mold sets off particularly severe attacks, similar to

those brought on by pollens. Moldy hay is a prime hiding place. If attacks are recurring, lung damage follows (the brochopulmonary reference).

Treatment is three-pronged. First, you have to stop the acute attacks, for which steroid medicines are used, along with other drugs that help dilate the breathing tubes. Second, you want to prevent subsequent attacks as much as possible. Drugs such as cromolyn or low doses of steroids help. The third aspect of treatment hardly needs mention — avoiding places where the aspergillus is abundant. For some, this can demand a change of occupation.

Why are some bothered by this mold and others are not? The answer lies wrapped in the mysteries of allergy itself, how some of

Doctor

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Aspergillus
Website

www.aspergillus.org.uk

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