

What is MCS?

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is a chronic medical condition with symptoms in multiple organ systems which happen in response to exposures to extremely low levels of toxic chemicals (poisons).

MCS is not an allergic condition. It is a reaction to low level exposures to toxic chemicals (poisons) in our environment. Reactions may be immediate or delayed. People with MCS can be made ill by exposure to chemicals found in everyday life such as pesticides, insecticides, household cleaning products, air fresheners, deodorizers, glue, carpets, new building materials, paint, ink, emission from photocopy machines, automobile exhaust, gasoline, fumes from charcoal grilling, air fresheners, perfumes, scented products, carbon paper, shampoos, deodorants, lotions, hairspray, incense, dry cleaning chemicals, inks and newspapers, magazines. This list could go on and on and on.

What causes MCS?

MCS is caused by **our bodies becoming overburdened with toxic chemicals from our environment.** Numerous toxic chemicals are known to alter healthy genes into susceptible / defective genes. Once healthy genes have been altered into susceptible/defective genes, all it takes is minimal exposure to most volatile chemicals to trigger Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS).

How prevalent is MCS?

MCS is an alarmingly increasing public health problem worldwide. **Millions of people** of all ages, including young children, have become sensitized following exposure to toxic chemicals in the environment. Toxic pesticides that are used in schools, housing, offices, malls, lawns, public parks and facilities, contribute greatly to the incidence of MCS. The United States of America, Canada, Germany, Australia, England, Japan, China, are among the countries greatly affected by MCS.

Is MCS acknowledged?

Yes. MCS is acknowledged by several US Government agencies including the Social Security Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Environmental Protection Agency, Americans with Disabilities Act, the Access Board (an independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for persons with Disabilities), and other governmental agencies and commissions.

The Access Board has adopted, as of July 26th, 2000, a policy to promote non-toxic, fragrance-free environments for persons disabled by MCS. For additional information on Board's Fragrance-free Policy, see: <http://access-board.gov/>. Employers, schools, offices, hotels, stores, Doctors and Dentists, Health Care Facilities, and other public places, and transportation, must make their premises accessible and provide reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for people disabled by MCS. The accommodations should be tailored to the specific needs of a person disabled by MCS and worked out satisfactorily between that person and the establishment. Due to the nature of the disability fast service should be granted for persons disabled with MCS to avoid potentially life-threatening reactions. It is not uncommon, for an establishment, not accessible for persons disabled by MCS, to modify its policy and provide services at the home of the disabled person.

Governors of 25 States have proclaimed Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Awareness Week in their respective States. MCS Awareness was proclaimed in the States of : Florida, Michigan, Hawaii, Kentucky, Washington, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Ohio, Illinois, Mississippi, Minnesota, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Maine, Montana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

What are the symptoms of MCS?

People with MCS become ill and experience a wide range of invisible, debilitating, life-threatening reactions upon even minimal chemical exposures. Exposures can be via inhalation, skin absorption, and / or ingestion. Symptoms can be single or multiple. The diverseness of these symptoms will give you some idea of why this illness is so often misdiagnosed. **Symptoms** can include, but are not limited to: breathing difficulties, speech problems, neurological problems, severe muscle and joint pain, trouble concentrating, short term memory loss, confusion, visual changes, disorientation, dysfunction of the senses, loss of smell or acute sense of smell, sinus congestion, burning eyes and throat, nausea, digestive problems, difficulty swallowing, extreme fatigue, brain fog, numbness, tingling sensations, convulsions, difficulty concentrating, gastrointestinal distress, diarrhea and /or constipation, skin problems, unexplained anger or crying when not sad or depressed, heart palpitations, irregular heart beat, mood and behavioral changes, headaches of varying severity, feeling of pressure in the head, sleepiness, insomnia, and rhinitis. MCS people may have severe food intolerances and hypersensitivities to molds, pollen, algae, insect bites, and medications, all of which can be life-threatening.

Regardless of the form in which the symptoms of MCS manifest themselves, **MCS is a reaction to the toxic chemicals in our environment.**

Is there a cure for MCS?

No. There is no cure for MCS at the present time. **Avoidance** of toxic chemicals is the only way to prevent a worsening of the condition and the only way to prevent severe reactions. **However** significant reduction /elimination of toxic chemicals in our environment could stop this illness dead in its tracks.

Can you imagine: A life in which you have to stay away from anyone using regular laundry and personal care products? A teacher who can't be near books or photocopiers? A nurse who can't be in a room where strong cleaners have been used?

Can you avoid being near anyone who has used fabric softener, scented deodorant, cologne?

Can you picture: working, going to school, or living in an environment which must not contain any chemicals to which you react?

How Does a Person Cope with MCS?

It's not easy! It's like swimming against the current when you're really, really tired. Our way of life has changed dramatically during the past century and we are now a society that is very dependent upon chemicals. Unfortunately most of the chemicals that we use have been poorly studied, if at all, for their effects on human health. The CDC's Body Burden report documents that our bodies contain many, many toxic chemicals that should not be there. **Total avoidance is impossible.** A person with MCS can only decrease exposures, not eliminate them completely. That is why it is so important to avoid toxic chemicals whenever we can.

Toxic Chemicals are Poisons.

The toxic chemicals in our environment are capable of **causing permanent damage** to organs such as the **brain, liver, spleen, pancreas, lungs**, etc. Toxic chemicals can **cause reproductive damage** and **cancers**. A good book on the subject of choosing products is "The Safe Shopper's Bible" by David Steinman and Samuel S. Epstein. **Once a person becomes MSC, extremely small amounts of chemicals will cause reactions.** Unfortunately **many manufacturers are exempt from full disclosure of and safety testing** of the ingredients in their products by claiming "**trade secret.**" However in February 2005, the **US Food and Drug Administration** issued a **warning to the fragrance**

and cosmetics industry stating that they are serious about enforcing law requiring companies to inform consumers that **their products have not been safety tested.** We sincerely hope that our government will make good on this warning, as it is yet to be seen.

Ask your doctor to demand the ingredients of any chemical fragrance product to which you react. Cite the following: 29 CFR 1910.1200 and 1910.20, **the OSHA Hazard Communication and Access to Medical Records standards allowing health professionals access to trade secret information.**

RESOURCES:

<http://www.fpinva.org>
<http://users.lmi.net/wilworks/>
<http://www.mcsrr.org/>
<http://www.ciin.org/>
<http://www.mcs-global.org>
<http://www.ourstolenfuture.org/>
<http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/members/2003/5940/5940.html>
<http://web.health.gov/environment/mcs/toc.htm>
http://www.chemicalbodyburden.org/rr_cheminus.htm
<http://www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden/es.php>
<http://www.wtv-zone.com/infchoice/mcs/perfumes.html>

MCS Changes Lives Forever.
You have many choices. Make them wisely.

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Do you know about...

MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY (MCS)



**An Increasingly Alarming
World Wide Public Health Problem
Caused By
Our Toxic Environment**

**This brochure is provided by:
The Global Recognition Campaign
for
Multiple Chemical Sensitivity**

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