

What is Multiple Chemical Sensitivity?

There are lots of answers written from many points of view. We keep adding chemicals to our environment. We keep reducing fresh air available to us. A chemical that is strong enough to eliminate insects will have unintended effects on other living things. Plastics are a part of our everyday life. With tens of thousands chemical exposures and the untold combinations of exposures, some bodies react to those exposures.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity; in broad terms unusually means a severe sensitivity or allergy-like reaction to many different kinds of pollutants including solvents, VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds), perfumes, petrol, diesel, smoke, "chemicals" in general and often encompasses problems with regard to pollen, house dust mites, and pet fur & dander.

What are the symptoms of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity?

The possible list of symptoms of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is almost endless - varies from one patient to the next. Also worthy of mention here is the fact that there is no sharp demarcation between the symptoms of MCS and those of ME/CFS/CFIDS/PVFS (myalgic encephalomyelitis - chronic fatigue), but that most sufferers of MCS complain of at least several of the following:

- burning, stinging eyes
- wheezing, breathlessness nausea
- extreme fatigue/lethargy
- headache/migraine/vertigo/dizziness
- poor memory & concentration
- runny nose (rhinitis)
- sore throat, cough
- sinus problems
- skin rashes and/or itching skin
- sensitivity to light & noise
- sleeping problems
- digestive upset
- muscle & joint pain.



So why is testing our home, school or business important?

Would you allow a poisonous snake to bite you just because you had the anti-venom?

As an example, when you take anti-histamines without removing the cause of your body producing the histamines, your body continues to try to convince you to stay away from the cause of your bodies' reactions. You will then need to take more medication, and your body will continue to communicate to you to change the exposure. The best procedure is to try to discover the cause of the problem and correct it. ...instead of allowing "the snake to bite you and then taking the anti-venom".

How can one person in a home have MCS or reactions to mold and the person not have any ill health?

The answer is that: "life is complicated."

Exposures are considered as "time loaded" What that means is that long term low exposures can have the same effect as high short term exposures. One spouse spending an average of 20 hours a day in the home has different exposures than another with an average of 12 hours a day. A person that had an exposure to pesticide when their parents poured Chlordane around the family home when they were a child has a different exposure experience than others.

It is often the case that for the average “healthy” individual, the toxic chemical in question poses no significant health risk but that to the multiple chemical sensitivity sufferer, that same “dose” of chemical can cause all manner of unpleasant or even dangerous symptoms.

The healthy individual is not affected because:

1. they are not allergic or sensitized to that toxin
2. the toxin is present at a sufficiently low level so as not to cause the normal toxic reaction that would be experienced by all.
3. they are exposed to the toxin for a period of time which is so short as not to produce any symptoms.

The multiple chemical sensitivity sufferer, by contrast, will often react severely to a very brief exposure of an extremely low level of excitant (trigger) - [parts per million / pp billion]. As well as a predisposition to allergy and multiple chemical sensitivity on the part of the sufferer, there is also the nature of the toxin itself to be taken into account, as some chemicals and materials have an inherent tendency to sensitize, while others are essentially inert.

What kind of chemical exposure is unhealthy?



Depends! It depends on your own body. The classic example is that some children are sensitive to peanuts. Others can live on PB & J. Some people turn into zombies with high pollen counts, others do not have any reaction. We are all miraculously different, just like snowflakes. Penicillin is the miracle drug which saved many lives. Some react very badly to that drug. Even more amazing, the mold Penicillium is a trigger for Asthma in many people. Smoking can be the cause of lung cancer, but many people smoke a lifetime and never get that cancer. Then there is good old fashioned industrial pollution.

What are the most common contaminants in Multiple Chemical Sensitivity ?

Relatively inert materials include, for example, Sand, silica, gold, titanium, water, chalk, etc.

Those with a moderate tendency to cause allergy / sensitization may include, for example, Soya products, wood dust, nickel, latex, strawberries, etc.

Those which show a pronounced tendency to sensitize include: Formaldehyde, isocyanates, epoxy resins, peanuts, shellfish, sulphur dioxide, etc.

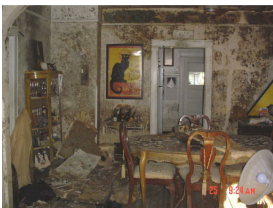
Even this last group of materials will not cause problems for everyone, but for those who ARE sensitized, exposure – in whatever form – could be very serious or even fatal.

What do you mean when you say “new” chemical exposures?

The new plastic of the day is a plastic formulation that allows bottles to be thinner, cost less and leave less material in the landfills. OK, I get it, but the real reason for the material is less cost to manufacturer and less weight to ship.

However, we have just found out about plastics that contain PBAs can be carcinogens if they are exposed to sunlight or high heat. That would be the water bottles that have a different taste when you drink from them. New chemicals can leech different byproducts into the environment in different conditions.

What can you do for chemical exposures?



We have found many different exposures in home environments. Hidden mold can be the cause of a child living with asthma the rest of their lives. We have found homes with more than 4 times the allowed formaldehyde; we have found pesticides, off gassing of toxic organic chemicals from everyday materials such as hardwood floor finishes, and many other exposures such as Legionella and CO from, improperly installed equipment. . Adjustments and changes to ventilation systems and environmental conditions can improve the health of residents.

There are some very good places to start – for example, buying different consumer products with lower pollutants or no pollutant levels will help considerably. Other aspects of pollutant reduction are much more difficult – though not impossible – to achieve (such as the removal of all MDF, melamine, ply, chipboard, fabric treatments, etc). The best advice that the multiple chemical sensitivity sufferer can be given & which is repeated here, is that if you cannot completely eradicate pollutants from your entire home, then to create a clean “oasis” within your home : although ideally this would include the entire home, if this is not practicable, then the next best option is to create one or two “clean” rooms within the home – ideally, those rooms where you spend most of your time – probably your bedroom and

living room. The fact that you have the ability, in times of difficulty, to retire to your own special “haven” of cleanliness & purity has benefits both physical & psychological – a genuinely safe area to spend time & recuperate - a retreat from the polluted world outside

Will EnviroSpect work with my health care provider?



Absolutely! Your health care providers are not equipped to check your home, school or business for environmental exposures. We can't test your body. Both are important! We can perform that environmental testing to help health care providers identify the best course of treatment to make our client's lives healthier. Detoxification is an “up hill” battle to start with. If you do not remove the toxins, it could be an impossible battle.

What can be done about triggers in my home?

You can change the products in your home – for example, buying different consumer products with lower pollutants or no pollutant levels

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What can be done about triggers in my workspace?

Explain your problems to your employer

Tactfully request that colleagues be aware of your problems & if at all possible, avoid smoking & the use of perfumes whilst around you

You can request that your workstation / office is sited well away from common sources of pollution, such as photocopiers, fax, printers, etc

If you have access to opening windows, make use of these when practicable to ensure fresh air.

What is the theory of enzyme depletion as having a role in MCS ?

Detoxification of all manner of naturally occurring toxins is carried out in humans by enzymes in the liver. These same enzymes are also used to detoxify a wide range of synthetic chemicals, but, if the enzymes are depleted or damaged by health problems, then they are unable to metabolize these toxicants efficiently, so leading to the problems associated with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity.

Enzyme depletion is used to great effect with some types of pesticide, where the action of the primary poison is augmented by the use of an enzyme blocker so that the poison cannot be metabolized properly, remains in the body of the organism longer, and so is much more highly toxic than it would otherwise be.

Many types of enzyme deficiency can be inherited & this may lead one to suppose that MCS may affect other members of the same family and, in fact, there is some (fairly tentative) evidence to support this view.

My child has asthma, should we have an assessment or test our home?

Environmental triggers are primary triggers for many asthmatics. The emphasis has been on learning to intervene with inhalers and medication before the chronic stage becomes acute events. Removing environmental triggers is one step before the medication to avert acute events. Reducing triggers reduces events. We can often suggest methods to improve the indoor environment.

RESOURCES

- [**Multiple Chemical Sensitivity**](#)

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is basically a subset of Environmental Illness (EI), which is caused by living in a toxic world. ...

www.ourlittleplace.com/mcs.html

- [**Multiple Chemical Sensitivity**](#)

Jul 4, 1998 ... *MCS* usually starts with either an acute or chronic toxic exposure, after which this initial sensitivity broadens to include many other ...

www.mcsrr.org/factsheets/mcsdisorders.html

- [**The Chemical Sensitivity Foundation - Raising public awareness ...**](#)

The primary goal of the Chemical Sensitivity Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, is to raise public awareness about *multiple chemical sensitivity*.

www.chemicalsensitivityfoundation.org/

[**Multiple Chemical Sensitivity**](#)

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It is now referred to as Multiple. Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) by the general population *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity*—page 3. Helpful Resources ...

ohioline.osu.edu/cd-fact/pdf/0192.pdf -

- [**MCSurvivors: Multiple Chemical Sensitivity \(MCS\) and Environmental ...**](#)

Resources for those with *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity* (MCS, environmental illness (EI) or toxic chemical poisoning)

www.mcsurvivors.com/