

## 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, 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 Canadian Government agencies including the Canada Pension Plan, WSIB and Nova Scotia Worker's Compensation, Health Canada, Ontario Ministry of Health, Ontario and Nova Scotia Medical Associations, Nova Scotia Department of Health, Public Works Canada, Public Service Alliance of Canada, CMHC, the Ontario and Canadian Human Rights Commissions.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians has recently developed a peer presenter on Environmental Health, which includes MCS, and is CME accredited. Get the details at: <http://www.ocfp.on.ca/English/OCFP/Members/Committees/EHC/default.asp?s=1>

The AEHA of Nova Scotia has some excellent information on their website at <http://www.environmentalhealth.ca/sos.html>

Included is information on accommodating employees with Environmental Sensitivities entitled: "A guide For The Workplace", "A Guide For Building Managers" and "Employee awareness Kit"

Employers, schools, offices, hotels, stores, Doctors and Dentists, Health Care Facilities, other public places and transportation must make their premises accessible and provide

reasonable accommodations under the Ontario and Canadian Human Rights Act.

## 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, **it is a reaction to the toxic chemicals in our environment.**

### **Is there a cure for MCS?**

**Yes and No.** There is no cure for MCS using allopathic medicine. Drugs administered to treat symptoms are usually not well tolerated and often end up making the patient worse.

**Avoidance** of toxic chemicals is extremely important to prevent severe reactions and a worsening of the condition. This includes **eating only whole organic foods** and supplementing with the required nutrients. Great strides have been made with **Alternative** treatments with some patients claiming to be cured using **EPD**, (Enzyme Potentiated Desensitization) **NAET**, (Nambudripad's Allergy Elimination Technique) **detoxing** or through **religion**. Striking improvements have also been noted through the use of Naturopathy, Homeopathy, Acupuncture etc.

Most of the treatments that help are not covered by OHIP or the Health Insurance Industry and are expensive. Since many MCSers have no health insurance and have only small or no disability pensions, it is impossible for them to afford the help they need.

**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 photocopies?

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, trace amounts of chemicals will cause serious adverse reactions.**

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

*What you should 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 Campaign for Recognition of  
Multiple Chemical Sensitivity**

**[www.mcs-global.org](http://www.mcs-global.org)**