

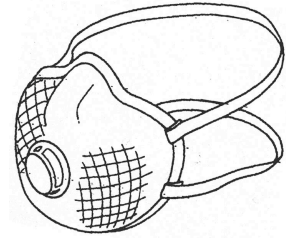
Resources for Environmental Illness & Chemical Sensitivity

A Fact Sheet from Toxic Free NC

What Is MCS?

Adapted from “MCS for Beginners”

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is a complex of symptoms triggered by exposure to toxic substances in the environment. MCS goes by many names and acronyms, including environmental illness, toxicant-induced loss of tolerance, and others. Common symptoms of MCS can include extreme fatigue, confusion, headaches, skin disorders, respiratory problems, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and others, and occur in MCS sufferers at exposure levels far below what can be tolerated by most people. If untreated, MCS can intensify with increasingly severe symptoms, affecting more bodily functions, and can become disabling.



The causes of MCS are unknown, though there is wide genetic variability in people’s ability to process and eliminate toxins from their bodies. Symptoms often begin after a large exposure to a known toxicant, or after chronic low-level exposure over a long time period. Most people who have MCS cope with this by avoidance of chemicals. This can mean many lifestyle changes, from avoiding people who wear perfume, to removing toxic carpeting, to finding safer housing. Because MCS symptoms and coping strategies can be socially isolating, it is important for sufferers and their loved ones to find support groups.

Many officials, including North Carolina Governor Mike Easley, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Social Security Administration have recognized MCS as a disabling condition, although it can be very difficult to get adequate diagnosis and treatment from a physician. As research continues, however, there is hope that there will be more information available for physicians on this disorder.

Common chemical triggers can include: pesticides; perfumes; inks and dyes; paints, stains, and waxes; detergents and fabric softeners; carpeting and carpet pads; cleaning and building products; cosmetics and shampoos; pressed-wood furniture; antibacterial soaps and deodorants; drugs; gas stoves, furnaces and hot-water heaters; synthetic clothes and bedding; treated fabrics; tobacco smoke; copy-machine toner; processed (factory-produced) foods, and many other sources.

Resources for information and support

In North Carolina:

North Carolina Chemical Injury Network

6442 Hwy 42, Bear Creek, N.C. 27207 336/581-3471

<http://www.ncchem.com> email: haywood@rtmc.net

Members will have access to the following services: counseling, advice, referrals to appropriate medical and legal practitioners, and introductions to other members for mutual support.

Protect All Children’s Environment (PACE)

396 Sugar Cove Road, Marion, NC 28752 704/724-4221

<http://www.main.nc.us/pace/> email: pace@mcdowell.main.nc.us

Fighting pesticide pollution since 1986.
www.ToxicFreeNC.org | 1-877-NO-SPRAY



PACE exists to respond to the need for comfort and support by pesticide victims providing support to fellow pesticide survivors on an all-volunteer, not-for-profit basis. There are no charges for information, counseling or other services. PACE is unique in that true empathy is expressed through shared experience.

North Carolina Resources, continued:

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

PO Box 448, Pittsboro, NC 27312 919/542-2402

<http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org> Email: info@carolinafarmstewards.org

Resources for organic growers and consumers, including where to buy local & organic foods.

Around the US:

Chemical Injury Information Network

PO Box 301, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645 406/547-2255

<http://www.ciin.org>

CIIN provides its members: expert witness/doctor and attorney referrals, a directory of organizations and CIIN members for the state where the member resides, referrals to experts on Electro-Magnetic Fields (EMFs), Less-Toxic Pesticide and Weed Control, etc., peer counseling, an excellent monthly newsletter, [Our Toxic Times](#), and resource materials.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, and Chemical Sensitivity Coalition of Chicago

PO Box 277, Wilmette, IL 60091 Voice mail: 312/409-5363

<http://www.cfccc.net/>

This is the new home of the former “MCS/Health & Environment” organization. A Chicago-area support group with an excellent monthly newsletter for MCS, Chronic Fatigue, and Fibromyalgia folks, [CFS/Canary News](#), and lending library for members. Membership costs \$20/year.

Health Care Without Harm

1901 N. Moore Street, Suite 509 Arlington, VA 22209 703/243-0056

<http://www.noharm.org/> email: info@hcwh.org

The campaign for environmentally responsible health care. Mission: To transform the health care industry worldwide, without compromising patient safety or care, so that it is ecologically sustainable and no longer a source of harm to public health and the environment.

MCS Referral & Resources

508 Westgate Road, Baltimore, MD 21229 410/889-6666

<http://www.mcsrr.org>

Physician and clinical referrals, information and resources for sufferers of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and other environmental illnesses. Will assist with finding physicians, support groups, expert testimony, and more. Staff is made up of volunteers; leave a message and they will call back.

Rachel's Democracy & Health News

P.O. Box 160, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903

<http://www.rachel.org> email: peter@rachel.org

Rachel's is a well-written and thoroughly-researched weekly newsletter covering a wide variety of environmental health issues. Free subscriptions are available via email. To subscribe, send a blank email to: rachel-subscribe@pplist.net

Fighting pesticide pollution since 1986.
www.ToxicFreeNC.org | 1-877-NO-SPRAY

