

MCS Info



Do A Good Chemical Clean-Up: chemicals make you fat and fatigued!

From Dr Sarah Myhill

We live in an increasingly polluted world containing an increasing number of toxic chemical which are toxic to our genes, to our brains, to our internal metabolism and to our immune system. These nasty chemicals almost certainly account for our ever increasing incidence of cancer and birth defects and our declining fertility due to life time exposure. I believe they also make us more susceptible to chronic fatigue syndrome because they are toxic to the immune system, to the brain, to our hormonal control and our internal metabolism.

It is impossible to completely avoid every chemical - if I did blood tests I would find a wide range of organochlorine pesticides in everybody. However anything which can be done to reduce the chemical load will be helpful in allowing our bodies to recover.

I was very interested by a book recently published "The Detox Diet" by Dr Paula Baillie Hamilton which explains how chemicals in foods and the air interfere with internal metabolism to make us fat and lethargic - indeed she points out that farm animals are deliberately fed hormones, antibiotics and pesticides to make them fat and lethargic, and therefore they do not have to eat so much in order to put on weight (cheap meat!). Many chemicals are persistent and concentrate up through the food chain - it is very likely that if we were the farm animal we would be declared too toxic to eat.

The following issues need to be addressed to reduce your chemical exposure:

Foods

- Eat small amounts of the best quality food.
- Choose foods grown as naturally as possible.
- If organic food is available, go for it.
- Eat foods as unprocessed as possible - most foods in tins or packages have preservatives or have been irradiated.
- Eat foods which have not been plastic wrapped - the plasticiser gets into food.
- Avoid foods wrapped in aluminium foil, or in aluminium cans.
- Eat fresh foods - if they have to be stored, deep freezing is probably the least harmful.
- Contact the Soil Association or Henry Doubleday Research Association.

Water

A clean water supply is essential - the water companies are only interested in bacterial counts - they will not measure pesticide levels, heavy metals, hormone residues, volatile organic compounds or fluoride in your tap water. I consider bottled or filtered water an essential for potable use.

Clean air

- If you can smell it, it can make you ill - the obvious offenders are air fresheners, sprays, perfumes, cleaning agents but there are a host of other chemicals in everyday use.
- New paints and carpets (especially rubber backed, stuck down) out-gas toxic fumes for months after

- use water based paints wherever possible.
- Pesticides - dog and cat flea treatments, fly repellents, house fumigations, timber treatments all contain toxic pesticides which persist for months and years.
- Gas central heating and gas cookers can make some people ill.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning can present with CFS.

Cosmetics

Nearly all deodorants contain aluminium which applied to warm sweaty areas is readily absorbed. Aluminium is extremely toxic and has a known association with Alzheimer's disease. Perfumes and smellies can be a real problem especially with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity.

Garden chemicals

Many are extremely toxic. Children should not be allowed to play on treated lawns for at least 6 weeks after spraying.

Drugs

- Most CFSs know that alcohol makes them feel awful. This is also true of many prescription drugs such as beta blockers, antidepressants, cholesterol drugs, diuretics, hypnotics etc. If prescribed, each one should be tried with great caution.

Head lice treatments contain pesticides and should not • be used at all. Lice can be easily controlled with wet combing or electric "zappers".

Outdoor air pollution

Many industries discharge pollutants directly into the local air, water and soil. The worst offenders are power stations which burn toxic waste, manufacturing industry, nuclear power stations leaking radiation and the drug and chemical industry. Busy roads create traffic fumes. Nasty chemicals are dumped at toxic waste sites where they pollute ground water and soil.

You need local knowledge to identify these issues - further information from Friends of the Earth. Ask specifically about:

- Heavy metals - arsenic, cadmium, nickel, copper, lead, aluminium etc
- Radioactive waste
- Pesticide residues - organochlorines and dioxins, organophosphates, pyrethroids etc
- Small particulate matter (down to PMs 2.5 - don't settle for PMs 10)
- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) - solvents, benzene compounds
- Polluting gasses (SO_x, NO_x, CO_x - sulphur, nitrogen and carbon compounds)

Good nutrition

This is highly protective against toxic stress - this is further reason to take nutritional supplements - we all have nasty toxins on board which cause on-going damage to the body. Good levels of antioxidants (vitamins ACE and selenium) help protect, good levels of B vitamins help detoxify, good levels of protein, essential fatty acids and other minerals help to repair the damage.

A good example of this in action came out of the research into thalidomide. This drug prescribed to women in pregnancy as a "pregnancy safe hypnotic" caused serious birth defects if the women took it between the 38th and 42nd day of pregnancy. But not all babies were affected. This drug was tested in rats - no offspring were abnormal. This was a mystery to researchers, until someone had the bright idea of putting the rats onto nutritionally depleted diets. Then they started to get the foetal abnormality of phocomelia ("flipper limbs"). It was a combination of toxic stress (the drug) and nutritional deficiency which caused the problem to become apparent.

MCS Websites

Below is a list of MCS helpful websites ranging from companies supplying chemical free products to support and information groups. We hope you find this information useful.

[Ecos Organic Paints](#)

<http://www.ecosorganicpaints.co.uk/>

ECOS - the world's only range of solvent free paints and varnishes - literally a breath of fresh air! Molecular Sieve Air Purifying Paints for ultimate indoor air purity - absorb pollutants from the airspace in your home. EMR & ELF shielding solvent-free wallpaints to combat microwave, mobile phone, Tetra & pylon emissions - 98% shielding.

[Biosis Online Shop](#)

<http://www.ecolifeshop.co.uk/>

Specialists in innovative eco-lifestyle air purity and health-related products for health & home & especially for those with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, Allergies, Asthma, ME/CFIDS/CFS, migraine, breathing problems & eczema.

[ENJO Chemical Free Cleaning](#) <http://enjo.co.uk/eo/mcs-multiple-chemical-sensitivity.htm>

Award-winning, 100% chemical-free cleaning solution. ENJO's products are a global success story because they enable people to clean their homes effectively using only cold water. Scientifically proven to clean six and a half times better than traditional chemical cleaning products. Great for MCS, asthma, eczema and other allergies. In addition users save money, save time, and protect the environment.

[Green Solutions](#)

<http://www.green-solutions.com/>

The site is packed full of useful information and links which should help you to make more sustainable lifestyle decisions. Europe's leading eco-centre, with information on renewable energy, environmental building, energy efficiency, organic growing *etc.* Services include a visitor centre open 7 days a week, practical and informative publications, a mail order service of 'green' books and products, educational services for schools, consultancy for individuals and businesses, residential courses, membership and a free information service.

[Healthy-House](#)

<http://www.healthy-house.co.uk/>

Design for a healthy environment

[MCS Referral & Resources](#)

<http://www.mcsrr.org/>

Professional outreach, patient support, and public advocacy devoted to the diagnosis, treatment, accommodation, and prevention of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Disorders.

[Action Against Allergy](#)

<http://www.actionagainstallergy.co.uk/>

A national charity giving support and information to allergy sufferers, including contact details for your nearest allergy specialists.

<http://www.allergymatters.com>

Allergymatters is a unique One Stop Allergy Shop selling comprehensive Allergy prevention product ranges

<http://www.livingethically.co.uk>

An organic, ecological and ethical information and shopping portal

<http://www.mcsurvivors.com>

Information and resources on multiple chemical sensitivity (environmental illness)

<http://www.ei-resource.org/>

Offers news updates, articles, links directory, forums and more for sufferers of chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, multiple chemical sensitivities, autism and other related chronic illnesses. Run by a fellow sufferer.

MCS Helpful Information

Chemical Free becomes a charity – ‘MCS Aware’

Chemical Free, the support organisation for people with chemical and food sensitivities, is in the process of becoming a charity, ‘MCS-Aware’.

Those lucky enough to have internet access or someone to help with such things can access helpful information on their website at www.MCS-AWARE.org and sign up for a free e-newsletter.

Subscribers can choose to receive information by email (£15) or by post on chlorine-free paper (£16). You can subscribe on-line, or send a cheque or postal order payable to ‘Chemical Free Ltd’ to the above address. Benefits of membership include discount from relevant suppliers, access to members’ only section of the newsletter, MCS ‘stay safe’ wallet card explaining MCS.

Two new leaflets are available: ‘What is MCS?’ to help explain MCS to others; and ‘A Visitors Guide’ re what precautions may be needed to visit someone with severe MCS.

You can write with MCS queries
or for information to:
MCS-AWARE, 56 Gaping Lane,
Hitchin, Herts, SG5 2JE
or via email at info@MCS-AWARE.org

Our thanks to Sue Kerley for sending in this very helpful information.

Other MCS Information and Resources

1. *Multiple Chemical Sensitivity* by Malcolm Hooper
2. *Engaging with MCS* by Malcolm Hooper
3. *Understanding & Accommodating People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity in Independent Living* by Pamela Reed Gibson (2001) this can be read on-line at the Independent Living Research Utilization website: www.ilru.org/html/publications/bookshelf/MCS.html
4. *Information for Patients & Hospital Staff Regarding Treatment of People with M.E.* the Grace Charity for ME Includes guidance on care of people with MCS. Can be downloaded from www.thegracecharityforME.org/documents.asp
5. *Environmental Health in Hospital A Practical Guide for Hospital Staff; Part II Environment Sensitive Care* by Marshall & Maclennan, Canadian Society for Environmental Medicine (2001)

Please contact the office if you would like to obtain copies of any of the above items.

Helen has also done some work drawing together research on this, e.g. bringing together research findings regarding the basis of MCS, evidence for MCS in patients who fit 'CFS' criteria, and links to rationale for use of vitamin B12 in such patients. Also review of research regarding the impact of pesticides and other toxins, on people who fit 'CFS' criteria.

Contact Helen for details: 0141 570 2938.