

Tips for the Festive Season

Christmas Trees

Pine pollen is a major allergy trigger for some people. Fir, spruce, or cypress may be a better bet. The Leyland Cyprus is a sterile hybrid tree, which means it does not produce any pollen. Although it will still release terpenes (the pine smell) which is unlikely to be tolerated by people with MCS. **Wash your tree:** spray off your tree with water and allow to dry overnight in the garage before putting it up. This will remove some of the loose mould and pollen that is on the tree. Allow it to dry before bringing indoors. **Artificial Trees:** Wipe it down: Artificial trees may harbour dust and mould from storage. Wipe them down with a dust cloth, or take them outside and hose them off if they are not pre-lit. **Choose a tree with less off-gassing:** Some new artificial trees are made of moulded polyethylene (PE) instead of PVC, which may have lower levels of off-gassing. These trees are very realistic, but tend to be more expensive than PVC trees. **Try an eco-friendly alternative tree:** Some of the creative alternative trees have a modernist design, others are more basic. All are a fun solution to the Christmas tree dilemma, or why not find a suitable branch to bring in and decorate?



Christmas Decorations

Dust your ornaments: Christmas ornaments will have been sitting in a box all year, and may be coated in dust or mould. If possible, unwrap them outside to avoid spreading dust inside your home. Wipe them off with a soft cloth before hanging. At the end of the season, wrap your ornaments in new paper, rather than re-using old, dusty paper. **Clean your wreaths:** Artificial wreaths can be vacuumed or dusted with a soft cloth. **Avoid scented candles:** Scented candles can cause stuffy noses and irritated lungs. If you crave a little atmosphere with your holiday meals, try unscented beeswax, vegetable wax, or LED candles and tea-lights.



Tips on Decorating

Decorating products can cause reactions. If you have severe Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) avoid decorating until you are well enough to thoroughly test materials. Choose water based paints rather than solvents, but be aware that these can contain plasticisers (chemical substances) and can still cause reactions even if they say they are suitable for MCS. Always test products before using: cut out a small piece of card and coat thoroughly in the paint etc. Let it dry then place in a sealed glass jar. Put an unpainted piece of card in another jar as a control to check you're not reacting to the card or the jar. Place both jars in a warm place for 24 hours, then sniff cautiously. This will be the worst that this product will smell, so if you can cope with that, you should be ok. Try the test again to be sure by putting the jars in a warm place for 3 days. Try and have decorating done when the weather allows windows to be open freely and if possible be out of the house. Be prepared to allow a newly decorated room to outgas for as long as you can before using the room. Wallpaper paste containing anti-fungal should be avoided, instead use plain cellulose paste and add original borax to it to prevent mould.



Tips For Dealing With Electromagnetic Radiation

In the past couple of years the topic of electromagnetic fields (EMF) and electromagnetic radiation (EMR) has slowly and finally started to make its way into mainstream media and thinking. Birgit Richards has put together a list of some of the easy things you can change in your home without great effort to reduce your exposure to unnecessary and potentially harmful levels of EMF and EMR. 1) Replace your cordless phone with an old-fashioned corded one. Your cordless phone would by far be the biggest emitter of electromagnetic radiation in your home and it does this on a continuous 24-hour basis, whether you make a call or not. 2) Turn off all switches at the power points at night or run everything from one power point and place a timer on it. 3) Hold your mobile phone at a distance and use the speakerphone while making calls or get a shielded headset. 4) Avoid appliances such as clock radios, stereos or televisions close to the bed. 5) Make sure there are no extension cords running under the bed or close to it. *Birgit Richards is a building biologist who has worked in Australia and Europe since 2009. She tests homes for electromagnetic radiation, indoor air quality, chemicals, mould and other issues and assists her clients in reducing their exposure to these hazards, often through simple measures.*

<https://ecohealthsolutions.com.au/electromagnetic-radiation/>

Survey on Chronic Illness

A survey on chronic illness, disability and wellbeing has been put together to try and create a manifesto for improving the lives of the chronically ill. There are lots of sections where you can get across the specific needs and challenges of living with environmental illness. This is the link to the survey, followed by some accompanying information:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CIIPmanifesto

It forms part of the Chronic Illness Inclusion Project, funded by the DRILL programme of disability research in the UK. The survey seeks to validate some of the findings from intensive online focus groups earlier this year, which yielded a rich discussion on disability identity among people with energy-limiting chronic illness, and social attitudes to chronic illness. Using a social model framework, the research explores both impairment as a lived experience, and disability as social oppression and the relationship between the two. The main project aim is to produce a manifesto for change for people with chronic illness. The survey is open to anyone with a long-term health condition living in the UK. For anyone outside the UK, DRILL is a unique programme that supports research by and for disabled people, including those outside the academy.

If you would like to take part in the survey please contact: Catherine Hale, Chronic Illness Inclusion Project

Website: www.inclusionproject.org.uk

Twitter@chronicinclude

Facebook: [m.facebook.com/ChronicInclude/](https://www.facebook.com/ChronicInclude/)

ELECTROSENSITIVITY & ELECTROPOLLUTION RESOURCES

Electro Sensitivity UK

enquirers@es-uk.info
BM Box ES-UK, London, WC1N 3XX
tel: 0845 643 9748
www.es-uk.info

Electro-Pollution: W.E.E.P.

The Canadian Initiative to stop Wireless Electrical & Electromagnetic Pollution
www.weepinitiative.org

EM Fields

www.emfields-solutions.com

Substantial on-line library of related articles:
www.emfields-solutions.com/library.asp

Sale of products to help people recognise, detect, and protect against electromagnetic pollution: unfortunately no UK stockist exists, so this means shipping from the US

MCS-Aware Webpage on ES

<https://www.mcs-aware.org/electro-sensitivity>

MCS & ALLERGY RESOURCES & PRODUCTS

MCS-Aware www.mcs-aware.org

info@mcs-aware.org
56 Gaping Lane, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG5 2JE

Allergy UK www.allergyuk.org

info@allergyuk.org
helpline: 01322 619 898

The Healthy House* www.healthy-house.co.uk

Established as a family business in 1991 when "there was very little in the way of information or products available to help people who were suffering. **The Healthy House*** continues to be amongst the most well informed and personally experienced allergy mail order companies."

tel: 01453 752216

www.multiplechemicalsensitivity.org

Webpages on MCS

Environmental Illness Resource www.ei-resource.org

"The result of a wish to create one place where information on a number of related, and poorly understood, chronic illnesses could be presented. group of illnesses is variously referred to by names including *environmental illnesses* and *chronic neuroimmune disorders*" (www.ei-resource.org/site-info/site-info/about-us)