



MCS-AWARE

The charity for environmental illness

www.mcs-aware.org

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FREE SAMPLE



**What's Making You Ill?
Gluten And Dairy Intolerance
Natural Ways To Clean
Can Fashion Make You Feel Better?
Candida: How To Beat It
Does Electro-Sensitivity Affect Children?**

Plus: Low Allergy Recipes, Research, New Products, Q&A

From the Editor...



Welcome to all our new readers.

If you are affected by sensitivity to perfumes, cleaning products or other everyday products, have food intolerance or electro-hypersensitivity (EHS), we're here to help you feel better. MCS-Aware provides information and support to thousands of people in the UK and worldwide suffering from Environmental Illness (EI).

Our **membership** offers discounts for a range of services and products. Members can get access to useful help sheets, leaflets, a penpal community, a suppliers directory and much more.

You will also receive a copy of the **MCS-Aware Magazine** and can choose copies by post on chlorine-free paper or by email worldwide. The magazine has 3 editions over the year. Spring/Summer (48 pages), Autumn/Winter (48 pages) and a Christmas edition (24 pages). Our regular **E-newsletters** and online forum are available free online to provide up-to-date news and advice to our members and advertise products or services that may be helpful.

MCS-AWARE began in 2005 as the result of Nicki Greenham's personal experience of severe Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). This led to frustration at the lack of available information and the sense of isolation. There are thousands of people trying to live with multiple sensitivities. It is an unfortunate irony that those worst affected find their illness prevents them from accessing the information they need to facilitate recovery.

We are a small team of staff and volunteers and the charity is funded entirely by subscriptions, advertising and donations. If you would like to help

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Overseas: Prices as above for email, or for post please add an extra £9. (Prices correct 2021)
Post: MCS-Aware, Unit 8A Intech House, Wilbury Way, Hitchin, Herts. SG4 0TW

or volunteer your services please get in touch. MCS-Aware is a registered charity: 1152139. Donations are always welcome [online at MCS-Aware.org](http://www.MCS-Aware.org) or by cheque payable to 'MCS-Aware' - address below.

I hope you enjoy the magazine and look forward to hearing your comments. Best wishes for better health,

Helen

Helen Blacker, Editor

Something to think about...

People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy- Anton Chekhov



MCS-AWARE.org
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Mobile phones can cause brain tumours, court rules.

A landmark court case has ruled there is a link between using a mobile phone and brain tumours. Innocente Marcolini, 60, an Italian businessman, fell ill after using a handset at work for up to six hours every day for 12 years. Now Italy's Supreme Court in Rome has blamed his phone saying there is a "causal link" between his illness and phone use.

In an interview with the Telegraph newspaper Mr Marcolini said: "This is significant for very many people. I wanted this problem to become public because many people still do not know the risks. I was on the phone, usually the mobile, for at least five or six hours every day at work."



British scientists have claimed there is insufficient evidence to prove any link to mobiles. But the respected oncologist and professor of environmental mutagenesis Angelo Gino Levis gave evidence for Mr Marcolini — along with neurosurgeon Dr Giuseppe Grasso. They said electromagnetic radiation emitted by mobile and cordless phones can damage cells, making tumours more likely. The World Health Organisation urged limits on mobile use in 2012, calling them a Class B carcinogen. Read more about mobile phones at [www. MCS-Aware.org](http://www.MCS-Aware.org)
Source :<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/9619514/Mobile-phones-can-cause-brain-tumours-court-rules..html>

ADHD drugs overprescribed to 'help' in school

In the UK family-based therapy is recommended for treating children with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), with prescription drugs used only for children over six years old and as a last resort. According to the Guardian newspaper¹: 'There are no reliable figures for how many children under six have been given Ritalin. But Professor Tim Kendall, joint director of the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, who chaired the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline committee, confirmed that he had heard reliable reports of children in nursery and pre-school being prescribed medication unnecessarily, and that it was often parents who were putting pressure on GPs. He said: "There are two reasons why parents go shopping for a diagnosis. The first is to improve their child's performance at school, and the second is to get access to benefits. There are always GPs that will do it, but it's wrong to give a child a diagnosis without also consulting schools and teachers."

Dr Mercola comments: 'Many drugs used to treat ADHD are powerful, mind-altering medications linked to addiction, growth suppression, increased blood pressure and psychotic episodes. In children, the impacts of their long-term use are completely unknown. In a recent report from the New York Times, Dr. Michael Anderson, a paediatrician who sees many low-income families, brazenly states that he uses the ADHD diagnosis as "an excuse" to prescribe powerful drugs .. to kids



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- Share your stories and get our FREE E-newsletter at MCS-Aware.org



who are struggling in school. This may highlight a growing trend among paediatricians in low-income areas. In some cases, three and four children from the same family are all put on the medications, usually along with a prescribed sleep aid, as the pills often cause insomnia – as well as a long list of other serious side effects. Before resorting to drugs, please understand that behavioural problems in children – including what might appear to be serious mental disorders – are very frequently related to improper diet, emotional upset and exposure to toxins.”²

Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride has successfully demonstrated the power and effectiveness of this theory using the GAPS (Gut and Psychology Syndrome) Nutritional Program, which she developed in Cambridge, UK. Her GAPS theory – which is fully explained in her book, *Gut and Psychology Syndrome* – is an elegant description of how such conditions can develop as a direct result of gastrointestinal toxicity. Another helpful tool is a three-part interview with renowned children's health expert, the late Dr. *Lendon Smith*, on Non-Drug Treatment of ADD/ADHD.'

For more help see an excellent article by Dr Mercola available free on his website at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/9w3j42g>

1 Rowenna Davis, The Guardian, Friday 18 March 2011
2 http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2012/10/24/children-adhd-drugs.aspx?e_cid=20121024_DNL_art_2

Research Update: Co-factor-enhanced food allergy.

Alcohol, exercise or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) are frequently mentioned as amplifiers of food allergic reactions. A study including 74 cases of suspected co-factor enhanced food allergy (assessed by skin-prick tests, specific IgE and oral challenges) found that anaphylaxis accounted for 85.1% of reactions. In 99% of cases culprit food allergens were plant-derived - mainly vegetables and cereals. NSAID were involved in 58%, exercise in 52.7% and alcohol in 12.2%. Lipid transfer protein was the most frequently involved allergen. The study concluded that co-factor enhanced food allergy

11 Ideas for Natural Air Fresheners

- 1) Place cloves, cinnamon sticks, allspice or other favourite scented spice in a pot of water, simmer for 1-2 hours
- 2) Put a few slices of leftover orange or lemon rinds in a pot of water, simmer for 1-2 hours
- 3) Place bicarbonate of soda in an open container of your choice. Good for cupboards, fridges and other small enclosed spaces
- 4) 2-3 slices of white bread absorbs fridge odours
- 5) Place lemon slices in an open bowl in the kitchen
- 6) Lemon and bicarbonate of soda spray: Dissolve bicarbonate of soda in 2 cups hot water, add lemon juice, pour into spray bottle, spray into air as air freshener
- 7) Place unscented cat litter in bowls to absorb room odours
- 8) Vinegar in a cup or bowl rids rooms of odours
- 9) Charcoal placed in a bowl rids rooms of odours
- 10) Simply light a match for a few moments or burn a candle (scented or unscented). The flame from either will "eat-up" bad smelling gases in the air
- 11) Pour vanilla extract into a shallow dish and set in an out of the way place

From www.soapkitchenonline.co.uk

should be considered when assessing food, alcohol, exercise and NSAID allergic reactions.

Cardona V, Luengo O, Garriga T, Labrador-Horrillo M, Sala-Cunill A, Izquierdo A, Soto L, Guilarte M. Allergy. 2012 Oct;67(10):1316-8). Co-factor-enhanced food allergy.

Legal acknowledgement of the condition of EHS in Australia

For the first time in Australia, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal of the Australian Federal Court has provided legal recognition of the health effects of electromagnetic radiation (EMR) also known as electromagnetic frequencies. Great news for those suffering from Electro-Hypersensitivity (EHS). In a workplace compensation case, handed down on 28 February 2013, the Tribunal found that Dr Alexander McDonald suffered a workplace injury of a worsening of his sensitivity to EMR, as a result of him being required, by his employer, to trial the use of electronic equipment. The judge ruled that he was '... satisfied on the balance of probabilities that Dr McDonald has suffered either: an aggravation of his sensitivity to EMF; or, an aggravation of his symptoms by reason of his honest belief that he suffers from the condition of EMF sensitivity... Read more [here](#).



Enjoy reading this Magazine?

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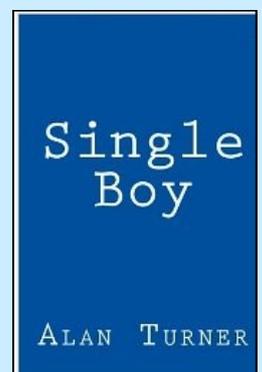
Membership subscription £24, Overseas post subscriptions add £9.

Cheques payable to 'MCS-Aware' or join online at www.mcs-aware.org

Fancy a Good Read?

Alan Turner was diagnosed with MCS in the 80s and has just published his first novel: *Single Boy*. "The novel takes a warm and humorous look at a man's difficulty in growing up while still searching for true love. The first few chapters cover his early years in Argentina before returning to the UK where he becomes an actor. Shortly after, he's diagnosed with MCS. And this becomes a recurring theme throughout the novel as he embarks on a journey to find a cure via alternative medicine while trying to make progress in his professional and personal life. The added obstacles he encounters along the way will resonate with people who have travelled a similar path. In its brief life, the novel has certainly helped to raise awareness about MCS. But from the feedback I'm getting, it also appears to be providing a great deal of fun and enjoyment. In its small way, *Single Boy* is playing its role in bringing MCS to people's attention, and this can only be a good thing."

Available as paperback and e-book from www.amazon.co.uk £8.99





Is Candida Making You Ill?

Everyone has Candida - a fungus (or form of yeast) that lives in your gut- and a significant proportion of us may have Candidiasis, or an overgrowth of yeast that can cause all kinds of symptoms.

Candida starts to cause trouble when there is some change in your body that allows it to overgrow. This change could be anything from a few courses of antibiotics, a prolonged diet rich in refined carbohydrates, added sugar, and high sugar containing foods e.g. fruits, poor levels of stomach acid, a depleted immune system or even something as common as a lengthy period of stress at work.

Candida may be a contributing factor in some illnesses and it may be the cause of others. However it almost always accompanies intestinal, immune, degenerative or toxicity related illnesses, adding an additional recovery challenge or even preventing recovery. Either way, reducing one's level of Candida will aid in healing by removing the suppressive impact of the Candida yeast and fungus and the constant strain caused by their toxic by-products.



Symptoms

There are more than 20 species of *Candida*, the most common being *Candida albicans*. The Candida population is usually kept under control by the friendly bacteria that should also be in your gut. However, when your immune system is down, Candida starts to multiply and can quickly take over leading to all sorts of undesirable symptoms ranging from fatigue and weight gain, to joint pain, gas, headaches, abdominal pain and depression. Yeast infections like thrush and athlete's foot are a sure sign that you have a yeast overgrowth. Candida can also contribute to mould and food sensitivities.

Candida feeds off sugars. As it multiplies it can weaken the intestinal wall, penetrating through into the bloodstream and releasing its toxic by-products

throughout the body. As they spread, these toxins cause damage to your body tissues and organs, wreaking havoc on your immune system. The major waste product of yeast cell activity is Acetaldehyde, a poisonous toxin that promotes free radical activity in the body. Acetaldehyde is also converted by the liver into ethanol (alcohol). Some people even report feeling a drunk or hung-over feeling along with debilitating fatigue from the high amounts of ethanol in their system.

Another problem is that if Candida makes the gut porous, food particles can escape into the bloodstream before they have been fully digested. In this form, the immune system reacts to the food causing an unpleasant reaction and increasing food intolerance.

Women are generally more susceptible to Candidiasis than men, as female hormonal levels are constantly fluctuating and sustained high levels of oestrogen can occur which tends to impair immune system function. As the growth of *Candida albicans* is stimulated by the female hormone progesterone, Candida symptoms can be worse during pregnancy and in the second half of each menstrual cycle. Synthetic progestins are found in oral contraceptives and also contribute to Candida overgrowth.

Tests

There are tests to show if you have Candida overgrowth. If the Candida infection is not visible (ie thrush, or skin) then determination of an intestinal overgrowth could be carried out through functional tests such as Organic Acids, Stool analysis, etc. as whilst the signs and symptoms give a good idea they may not be caused by Candida but by something else. Ask a supportive GP, BANT registered Nutritional Therapist, or a Dietician for details.

Symptom questionnaires can help you decide whether you should suspect Candida as the cause of your symptoms. One example is available at www.wholeapproach.com or send a stamped addressed envelope to MCS-Aware for a paper copy.

Recovery

Through following a proper and controlled protocol a Candida overgrowth can be eradicated and a “leaky gut” healed. The most commonly suggested plan used by experienced practitioners for the first stages of treatment includes:

Identification and removal of influencing factors

unless there is a medical necessity for their use, and always check with your health care provider. These include antibiotics, steroids, immune suppressing drugs, and birth control pills. Stress is another known contributing factor and steps should be taken to mediate stress through lifestyle changes.

Dietary Modifications

- Avoid foods with high yeast and mould contents including cheeses
- Remove dairy
- Remove added sugar to meals and snacks, remove all refined carbohydrates.
- Sweeteners should also be avoided. Very small doses of honey may be tolerable
- No fruit juices or fruit
- Avoid fermented foodstuffs (including vinegar) and abstain from alcohol
- Eliminate any known or suspected food allergens

Liver Support

It is not uncommon for chronic Candidiasis sufferers to also exhibit multiple chemical sensitivities and allergies. This is an indicator of a stressed detoxification pathway and supporting the health of the liver is very important in successful treatment. Ensuring good nutritional

support will include fresh produce, including whole grains, legumes nuts, seeds and fruit (when considered safe to be reintroduced into the diet). Elimination should be encouraged and good sources of soluble fibre are important to be included in the diet.



Nutritional Support

- Nutritional supplements to boost the immune system.
- Anti-fungal supplements (these may be natural or prescribed medication depending on the severity of the overgrowth) to kill the Candida.
- Anti-microbial agents
- Beneficial bacteria to help redress the balance in the colon.
- Digestive aids such as enzymes

Some people find they can ‘get away’ with eating fruit and still kill the Candida while others have to go as far as avoiding certain carbohydrates like pulses. Each person is different. There are various anti-fungals you can take and sometimes you will need a mixture in order to kill off different strains of Candida. It is important to go very slowly as Candida releases more toxins as it ‘dies’ than when it is alive.

Detoxifying too fast can make all your symptoms worse and can cause a sudden bout of severe depression or feeling emotional. This will pass as soon as your body excretes the toxins, but it is a sign that you are going too fast and need to slow down your treatment. (Sometimes just changing your diet is enough to cause Candida die-off symptoms.) Another possible explanation for severe die-off (‘die-off’ refers to the Candida, not you!) is that a person who is highly allergic might be reacting to the toxins produced by dead Candida. It is therefore a really good idea to see an experienced practitioner to oversee and control your treatment.

The woman who lives on a diet of only VENISON and SWEDE - because she says she's intolerant to everything else

- Her body appears to reject everything else she eats
- She has lost more than four stone
- "I barely have the energy to do anything"

Clare Greasley is a mother-of-two from Manchester who has been forced to eat a bizarre diet of only venison and swede after becoming intolerant to almost all foods. Clare's story was featured in the Daily Mail (October 2012). She told reporter Anna Hodgekiss these are the only two foods she can stomach, because her body appears to reject everything else she eats. Once healthy, Clare lost more than four stone because of the condition but doctors are unable to find an answer to her problems. "Venison and swede are the foods that give me the mildest reaction. I have to experiment with what I can eat, and I just about seem to be able to cope with those. Other than that, I'm limited to rhubarb and dried cherries.

"I used to love my life, running the house, and looking after my teenagers, but now, I barely have the energy to do anything. My husband and children are worried sick about me and I have to admit, I think my days are numbered."

Clare's food intolerance began back in the spring of 2011 when she started to develop abdominal pain. "I started getting awful pains in my stomach, side and abdomen so I went to the doctor. He organised to run a few tests but every time they came back normal. Throughout the year I had endless visits to A&E but again the doctors couldn't find anything wrong. Eventually I was told to forget about it and go on holiday, as though it was all in my head."

It was after her stay in hospital that Clare began to wonder if her eating habits could be causing the excruciating pain. The 45-year-old said: "I decided to try a gluten free diet to see if that would help. It made me feel a little better but still not completely well. Eventually even gluten free foods seemed to cause a bad reaction. I ate some brown rice at the beginning of the year and was in the worst pain I've ever experienced. It was horrendous. As the weeks went by, my intolerance became worse and worse, I was starting to wonder if there was anything I actually could eat. But whenever I spoke to the doctors they just told me it was impossible - I was literally laughed out of the surgery."

Clare reached breaking point when she collapsed at home after suffering terrible pains and headaches. She said: "I was rushed to hospital and stayed there for four weeks. I was given millions of tests but nothing seemed to work. I was even reacting to being fed through a tube." The full-time mother is devastated by the change in her life in such a short period of time. "I was a bright, happy, energetic, slightly overweight lady, but now I'm a shadow of my former self. I used to love a good takeaway, and spent days walking through the Derbyshire Dales. But now I'm all skin and bones, and my hair has started to thin. People look at me and say I have a figure to die for, but I don't want to be like this."

The only comfort Clare has managed to find is thanks to fellow sufferers of Total Food Intolerance. She says:



"The only people who seem to understand are people like me. It's like a mixture of having the worst hangover in the world, and being poisoned. You can't understand it unless you've been through it. The more people that hear about Total Food Intolerance the better. I need to get the message out there. Even some of my family and friends don't believe me - I barely believe myself! Doctors need to hear that there are many people who are suffering terribly as a result of this. I will never accept that, in the 21st century, there are so many people suffering horrendously every day, yet being denied help by their doctors.' Source: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2225652/The-woman-lives-diet-VENISON-SWEDE--says-she-intolerant-else.html#ixzz2AyMk3Zcd>

MCS-Aware has helpsheets for people with total food intolerance available at www.mcs-aware.org



Have You Tried...

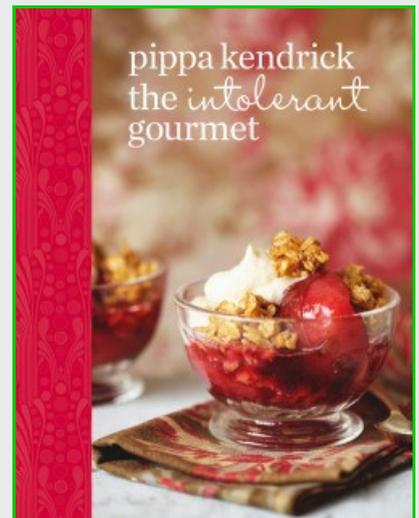
EMF Absorbing Wallpaper

EMF Shielding is extremely important in order to keep out electromagnetic smog. This wallpaper is highly absorbent and dampens down EMF in a room. It is supplied in rolls of 10.05m by 53cms and can be put up like ordinary wallpaper with standard paste. Cuts like lining paper with good flexibility over imperfect plaster. Can be covered with ordinary wallpaper and is easily paintable. Compatible with aluminium foil-based materials, easy to install, £49 per roll. Available from Beneficial Environments Tel. +44 (0) 1273 251956 www.beneficialenvironments.co.uk/product/emf-shielding-wallpaper/



Recipes for Multiple Food Intolerance

This is a beautiful recipe book by Pippa Kendrick. The Intolerant Gourmet, has a collection of delicious recipes free from wheat, gluten, yeast, egg, dairy and soya. With gorgeous photos it would make a lovely present. From bookshops or online. £8 from www.amazon.co.uk or good bookshops.



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Acceptance is Not Surrender -

Coping with Chronic Illness

"Life can either be accepted or changed. If it is not accepted, it must be changed. If it cannot be changed, then it must be accepted." - Author Unknown

stresses and negative feelings can rob you of the emotional energy necessary to move forward with your life. Lack of progress in your recovery or worsening symptoms can trigger negative thoughts that heighten feelings of anxiety and sadness, often leading to depression. Even though Environmental Illness is a *physical* condition, seeing a psychologist or counsellor can help build the emotional resilience necessary to navigate the difficulties of chronic illness. They can help develop appropriate coping strategies that will not only reinforce your treatment program, but also help you feel fulfilment in life regardless of physical limitations. Talking to other sufferers can also be helpful and reduce the feeling of isolation. In order to recover, your mental health is

as important as your physical health. Here are some other suggestions for coping with chronic illness:

Take control. No knight in shining armour, or magic potion is going to cure you of this illness. YOU need to take control and organise your recovery with the help of practitioners experienced in Environmental Illness (EI).

Read more. The more you know about your condition, the better equipped you'll be to understand what's happening and why. MCS-Aware can provide a list of recommended books. E-readers such as the Sony PRS-650 (no Wi-Fi), and DVDs or audio books can be helpful for those who react to fumes from print.

Make a healthy investment in yourself. Part of the treatment for almost any chronic condition involves lifestyle changes. This is even more important when you suffer from environmental

One of the most important things to do when faced with a chronic illness is to accept it. Acceptance allows us to adapt and to start the road to recovery, moving on with our new way of life. Lack of acceptance may lead to out of control emotions, particularly anger which is often taken out on family and friends (Sharma, 1996).

Acceptance is not the same as surrender; it doesn't mean that you have given up fighting or that we are inviting the illness to stick with us forever. *When you accept your illness, it frees your powers to work on recovery and rehabilitation that were earlier being used to protest and fight against the disease.* Coping with the mental and emotional challenges of a chronic illness requires an approach that is realistic, but also positive. Adapting to your condition or feeling good about the future may seem impossible at first, but it can be done. Day-to-day living may be difficult. Over time,

illness; stopping smoking, shifting to healthier eating habits and changing your home environment, toiletries, cleaning products etc. Prioritise them – this is the key to recovery and something you can start doing straight away – See page 20.

Make it a family affair. The lifestyle changes you make to detox your home and body are likely to be good for almost everyone. Instead of going it alone, invite family members or friends to join in.

Staying connected can be extremely hard if you have severe chemical or electro-sensitivities. Try to establish and maintain quality relationships with friends and family in whatever way you can: phone, email, Skype, written letters, recorded cassettes, home movies. Arrange to meet outdoors or for picnics if fragrances are a problem. Since Christmas can be the worst time of year for health, consider having a party in the summer instead. MCS-Aware can provide a PenPal Directory; sharing a conversation with people who know what you're going through can be an invaluable support.

Take care of yourself. Don't allow worries about your illness to get in the way of eating properly, getting rest and exercise, and having fun. Do something you enjoy and make time for relaxation every day. Avoid focussing on negative problems that you can't do anything about – stop watching the daily news!

Chronic illness can force many potentially stressful lifestyle changes, such as giving up cherished activities, adapting to new physical limitations and special needs, and paying for what can be expensive medications and treatment services.

Maintain a daily routine - and balance - of work, errands, household chores, and hobbies. You will probably have to find new ways of doing things, but a routine will provide a feeling of stability

amid the chaos and uncertainty of your illness.

Sort out your finances. You may be lucky enough to have a sympathetic employer who will make changes to your work environment, but many people find they have to give up their job when they get ill. Find out what benefits you are entitled to, or see if you can work from home eg with a shielded computer or telephone. Environmental Illness can be expensive, so make a list of the things you need and prioritise them, so you don't waste money.

The more ill you are, the more a practitioner is essential to co-ordinate your recovery. MCS-Aware can provide a list of practitioners who have experience in treating Environmental Illness. GPs vary in their support; if your doctor won't give you the information you need, you might want to start looking for a new doctor.

Make your doctor a partner in care, or to put it more bluntly: Take responsibility for your care and don't leave everything to your doctor. Don't expect doctors to offer you a magic cure – you will have to work WITH them to get better. One



way to do this is to listen to your body and track its changes. You will also need to change your home environment, diet and lifestyle. Make sure all your consultants, nutritionists, complementary practitioners etc are

aware of all the tests and treatments you have.

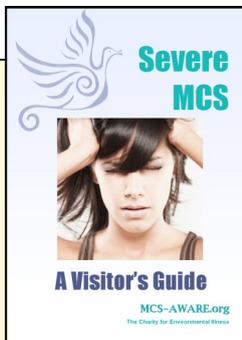
Manage your medications. People with MCS often do not tolerate drugs well. Knowing about the drugs you take — why you take them, how best to take them, and what problems to watch out for — is as important as learning about your condition. Find out all the ingredients and options of a proposed medicine/ treatment options so you can make an educated decision about which ones you are least likely to react to. If a medical treatment is unavoidable, don't get

stressed about it as this will make potential reactions worse. Accept this is the best course of action for you at this moment.

Environmental Illness is difficult to understand because it is so different from people's everyday experience – 'They wouldn't be allowed to sell it if it made people ill.' 'How come it doesn't affect me, I've been using Wi-Fi/ perfume etc for years?' Limitations on what you can do may affect your relationships with friends and family, but for all the people you lose contact with, you will make some understanding new friends through your contact with the EI community, and you will cherish the people who do stand by you. Be patient and use the MCS-Aware leaflets to educate those around you but don't waste energy trying to change people's minds – it rarely works. Move on and use your energy to get well instead.

Members can find practitioners and suppliers directories as well as further helpsheets and a PenPal application on their *Information Request Form*.

You can join online at www.MCS-Aware.org or simply send a cheque payable to 'MCS-Aware' for £24 to MCS-Aware, 8A, Intech House, Wilbury Way, Hitchin, Herts. SG4 0TW(UK). Remember to tell us if you would like your subscription by post or email. Overseas subscribers wanting post subscriptions, please add £9.



Gluten-Free Salt Dough:

Ingredients:

1 cup each: white rice flour, salt, and potato starch (corn starch would work too)
 2 tsp tapioca starch
 about 2 cups warm water

Mix the dry ingredients in a bowl and add water, about 1/2 cup at a time. I added a bit more as we played with the dough, as it tends to dry out in the air, but it's easy to re-moisten with a few drops of water or by wetting your hands before you knead it. After the water is all mixed in, knead the dough until it is soft and smooth.

Roll the dough (we didn't flour the surfaces or anything, but you can if you like.. it wasn't sticky at all, just crumbly if too dry.) We rolled ours to about 1/2" thick and then cut with cookie cutters to paint when they are dry. *Make sure you poke a hole in them with a cocktail stick (not too close to the edge, so they don't crumble!) for stringing to tie on the tree or as gift tags.

These air dry or you can bake them at a very low temperature, as long as you watch them carefully. A food dehydrator would work as well. Bake in the oven at 200° F/ 100° C/ 1/4 Gas mark until the shapes feel firm, which takes 2 hours. Turn off the oven and let the baking sheet sit in there for another hour.

Central Heating Matters

The more you turn the heating up, the colder you feel. Sounds familiar? Central heating can cause problems for people with chemical and electro-sensitivities.



Many people find they cannot tolerate heating. They might have breathing problems from the fumes from the accumulated dust that burns when heaters are first turned on and dust will also swirl around the room in the draughts created by warm air. Always keep appliances clean and free from dust and avoid heaters with fans that move the air around.

Some people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) react to gas fumes and even fumes from paint when it heats up (I reacted to tiny amounts of formaldehyde even from 15 year old painted radiators). If you have MCS it is not a good idea to have gas in the house. Some people cope with boilers if they are in an outbuilding or a porch or garage. Make sure there are no gas pipes in the house and that where the heating pipes do enter the house there are no air holes

around for the gas to sneak in. (You might cope with pure silicon sealant). Be careful to site vents away from doors and windows and consider which way the wind normally blows. Electric boilers are available which can simply replace a gas boiler, but these do have very large electro-magnetic fields and may need to be shielded or again sited well away from the house.

If you are reacting to the paint on radiators there are two options. Firstly try painting them with a formaldehyde sealant paint like this one from ECOS: AFR Radiator Paint (www.ecospaints.com Tel. 01524 852371). Some people find this ok, others still react to the small amounts of formaldehyde, or may react to the ECOS paint so



the next option is to try installing unpainted radiators eg stainless steel or polished aluminium. Occasionally people do have reactions to the metal when it heats up - this seems to be a particular problem in people who have heavy metal toxicity - so try one out before you go to the expense of replacing them all (towel rails are probably the cheapest option).

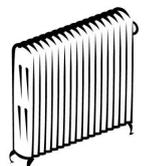
Before installing, give them a good clean with hot soapy water to get rid of any residue from polish. Make sure your radiator does not have any glued pieces (check the tops) and send them straight back if they do as the fumes will not outgas. Ask the plumber not to use plumbing grease as it is extremely smelly. Put the radiators on full for a couple of days to burn off any solder or polish residues (you might need to

be out of the house while you do that).

Be aware that some of the tall, vertical radiators seem to expand very noisily all the time. If you are buying several ask about a discount as you are buying them due to medical necessity rather than as a decorative feature. We bought ours from www.featureradiators.co.uk Tel. 01274 567789.

If you cannot tolerate radiators another alternative to investigate is geothermal and passive solar heating.

A longer article describing practical ways to keep warm if you have severe MCS or EHS is available in the MCS-Aware Winter 2012 magazine. Available online at MCS-Aware.org



Are We Microwaving Our Children?

Cringleford Primary School in Norwich, like many others moved into brand new buildings. As part of the refurbishment they introduced 19 wireless Access Points which exposed the children to microwave radiation all day. Is this a concern?

Recent years have seen a huge increase in the number of UK schools installing wireless computer networks (Wi-Fi, WLAN), wireless white boards, and similar devices. Schools have been positively encouraged to use 'smart' and 'mobile' technologies (BECTA). Wireless systems offer freedom to move around the school with laptops/hand-held computers and are easier and sometimes cheaper to install than wired networks. Schools have invested money in the technologies, pupils like them, and they have become a part of school culture.

However, schools, parents and staff are often unaware of the enormous number of scientific studies now published which suggest that mobile and wireless technologies that emit microwave radiation may pose a health risk, especially to children. The science is published in scientific journals, often only available to subscribers. The concerns of scientists and scientific studies are not always communicated to the public. Thus schools rely upon the statements about the use of wireless technologies in schools made by the UK Health Protection Agency and the AGNIR. There are concerns that the guidelines being used by the UK government are outdated, and in fact many other countries around the world have updated this guidance to include non-thermal health effects. At present there is no good evidence that wireless devices, though fun to use, are better educationally than using wire-networked computers that do not expose the children to pulsing microwaves all day. Parents usually have no say in the technology the school uses, although there are cases where informed parent committees have challenged and changed school policies.

Dr Martha Herbert, Asst. Professor, Pediatric Neurology Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA. [8th February 2013] has an extensive history of research and clinical practice in neurodevelopmental disorders, particularly autism

spectrum disorders. She recently reviewed literature pertinent to a potential link between Autism Spectrum Disorders and Radiofrequency Radiation, producing a 60 page single-spaced paper (pdf) with over 550 citations (1.5 MB). This is just one chapter from the latest BioInitiative Report written by leading EMF/RF bio-effects researchers from around the world. The BioInitiative website (www.bioinitiative.org) has the latest update assessing 1800 new scientific studies that have been published since 2007, many showing reasons for concern.

Should we be concerned?

The latest energy policies being introduced by the government is to fit smart meters in every home, school and workplace in the UK to replace analogue energy meters (water, electric and gas). 'Smart' wireless home appliances like home hubs, fridges etc all add to the load of low-level radiation we are being exposed to everyday and while we sleep. Despite the media spin there is in fact no research into the long term health effects of this kind of radiation on children or adults – the technology has simply not been around long enough for us to see the effects. Industries prioritising financial profits are usually the ones steering our 'progress', but the evidence that the increasing and constant level of microwave radiation has no effect on health is simply not there. There are thousands of papers that have accumulated over decades that document adverse health and neurological impacts of EMF/RF which can exert a disorganizing effect on the ability to learn and remember and can also destabilize immune and metabolic functioning. This will make it harder for some children to learn, particularly those who are already having problems in the first place. Children and adults with environmental illness are particularly vulnerable to the effects of wireless radiation. Research suggests the emissions interfere with cell membranes.



What can you do?

Since the effects of electro-sensitivity are cumulative, there are things parents can do to reduce radiation at home to help their child's health. Choosing to replace wireless gadgets with cabled versions (including baby monitors and the internet), will help. Replace DECT cordless phones with landlines, and switch off mobiles whenever possible (calls can be rerouted to a landline). Do not let children use mobile phones; adults should text, use a speakerphone or an air-tube-headphone to keep the device away from their heads. Since there are increasing studies showing

mobiles can affect fertility, it is also wise to turn your mobile off before putting it in your pocket, and at night. Time on Xboxes, PlayStations, Wii, etc can be reduced, or avoided. Turn off and unplug electrical devices and Wi-Fi at night; don't leave gadgets on standby. You do NOT have to have Smart Meters installed in the UK, you can legally keep your existing meters. Think twice about installing 'Smart' fridges etc which will increase the total amount of microwave radiation in the home. More information is on p21 and see [www. MCS-Aware.org](http://www.MCS-Aware.org) . Leaflets for schools are available from : <http://wifiinschools.org.uk/>

Recipes:

Chocolate Sponge Cake

6 large eggs
 3/4 cup icing sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1/3 cup cocoa powder
 1/3 cup potato starch
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 1/8 teaspoon salt
 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
 Butter or oil
 2 teaspoons grated orange peel, optional
 Extra icing sugar for dusting
 Filling: Jam, fruit puree or buttercream —see below



Preheat oven to 200°C/ 400°F/Gas mark 6. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Grease parchment paper with butter/ oil.

1. Separate egg yolks from whites. Place egg yolks in a large mixing bowl. Set egg whites aside.
2. Beat egg yolks on HIGH using an electric hand or stand mixer. Add sugar and vanilla and continue to beat on HIGH until mixture is creamy.
3. Combine cocoa, potato starch, baking powder and salt in a small bowl. Stir with a large whisk to thoroughly mix OR sift ingredients.
4. Gently fold dry ingredients into egg-sugar mixture. Fold in grated orange peel until combined.
5. In a separate large mixing bowl, beat egg whites until foamy. Add cream of tartar and beat on HIGH until the egg whites are stiff but not dry.
6. Use a large spatula to gently fold the egg white mixture into the cake batter. Fold until ingredients are blended.
7. Use a spatula to scrape cake batter into prepared baking sheet.
8. Bake in preheated for about 7 minutes or until the cake begins to pull away from the edges of the pan.
9. Cool cake on a wire rack. When the cake is completely cool, carefully invert it- with the parchment paper still on the bottom, onto a large sheet of waxed paper, lightly dusted with powdered sugar.
10. Slowly peel the parchment paper from the cooled cake.
11. Fill with buttercream, jam or softened ice cream. Roll like a swiss roll or use the flat sponge cake to make glorious gluten free Baked Alaska.

Dairy Free Buttercream: In a medium bowl, beat 1/3 cup dairy-free margarine with an electric mixer on medium speed or whisk for 30 seconds. Add 3 cups icing sugar, 2 tablespoons rice (or other) milk, and 1-teaspoon vanilla extract, and beat or whisk well for 2 or 3 minutes or until light and fluffy.

Chocolate version: 2 cups icing sugar, 1/4 cup margarine, 1/4 cup 'milk', 3/4 cup cocoa powder, 1/2 tsp vanilla extract.

Super Gourmet



For those who are on a severely restricted diet here are some simple recipes using a minimum of ingredients.

Veg Hash Browns

225g turnip/ swede or other cooked or grated root vegetable
 125g finely sliced and chopped white cabbage (cooked)
 125g rice flour (or any other flour)

Preheat oven to 160°C/ 325°F / Gas mark 3.

Mash the root vegetable. Then mix with the other ingredients. Pat into thick burger shapes. Cook on a greased baking tray for 20 minutes or until soft. If you're using raw ingredients this may take 40 minutes.

One food family: use swede, cabbage and olive oil, without flour.

Basic Burgers

Buy minced meat of any kind— lamb, turkey, venison etc. Or have a veggie version by mashing cooked beans with a starchy vegetable. Pat into burger shapes. If necessary add a little oil to bind together. Fry on a low heat until cooked- turn halfway through cooking. If you need very thoroughly cooked meat, add a little water and put a lid on the pan to steam the burgers. Take the lid off 10 minutes before the end of cooking.

Share your recipes:

Email: Nicki@mcs-aware.org

Post: MCS-Aware, 56 Gaping Lane, Hitchin, Herts. (UK) SG5 2JE

Black Bean Burgers -

Gluten and dairy free



Makes 15 Burgers (depending on size)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup millet OR cooked potato
- 2 1/2 cups water
- Grapeseed oil for frying
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon chilli powder
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 1/2 cups cooked black beans
- 1 cup sweetcorn, fresh or frozen
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup cornmeal

Preparing the millet:

1. Rinse the millet and place it in a frying pan over medium heat and toast for 3-4 minutes, stirring continuously.
2. When millet begins to take on a nutty aroma, add water, cover, and reduce heat to low and cook until all water is absorbed (about 25 minutes).
3. Remove from heat and set aside to cool slightly.

Burgers:

In a large frying pan over medium heat, sauté onion in grapeseed oil until soft (about 3 minutes).

1. Add salt, chilli powder, paprika and cumin and stir to combine.
2. Add black beans and corn and remove from heat.
3. Add cooked millet or potato and mash together.
4. Season to taste with pepper then stir in cornmeal a little at a time until batter is stiff.
5. Scoop and form mixture into 2-inch balls. Press down on balls to form patties.
6. Preheat large frying pan over medium heat and add 2 tablespoons of oil. Fill the pan with some of the burgers.
7. Fry 3-4 minutes per side. Check they are cooked through.
8. Place cooked burgers on a baking sheet, cover and keep warm in the oven until ready to serve.

Barbeque Sauce - *gluten and dairy free*

Ingredients:

1 3/4 tsp salt, 1/2 tsp pepper, 1 tsp paprika, 1 tbsp sugar or honey, 1/2 clove garlic, minced, 1/2 cup onion, minced, 1/2 cup water

Method:

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients together and mix well. While grilling brush often with desired amount of sauce.

Recipe courtesy of www.ener-g.com



4 Steps to Stay Safe

Multiple chemical Sensitivity (MCS) means your body cannot process toxins (xenobiotics) efficiently. As well as fragrances, this also includes disinfectants, anaesthetics and medicines. If you require medical or dental treatment, there are a few precautions you can take.

Tell Your Practitioner

Before you go to your appointment, send a short letter to your practitioner to explain that you have MCS, how it affects you and what your requirements are. MCS-Aware have a sample letter that can be requested by support group members.



Wallet Card

The MCS-AWARE wallet card is a useful way to explain MCS and keep you safe, with space on the back for your contact details. Simply send us a stamped-addressed-envelope.

Message in a Bottle

You can get this free from any chemist or from MCS-Aware. Quite simply it is a small plastic bottle with 2 stickers. The bottle is kept in the door of your fridge with any medical instructions inside. Place one sticker on the fridge door, and one on the inside of your front door at eye level. Ambulance crews are trained to look for the stickers and will know where to find the bottle. MCS-Aware has sample information for emergency treatment including pain relief and anaesthetics for MCS. Useful for completing the notes to go inside the bottle.



Medic Alert

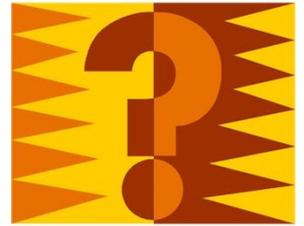
This charity provides bracelets and necklets to identify allergies and medical conditions. If you are on benefits, you may be able to get a discount on this service. Otherwise there is a small yearly subscription. Medic Alert send you a bracelet or necklace of your choice (glass bead ones are available) with a small metal tag containing details of your main sensitivities, your identity number and the Medic Alert phone number. Additional information can be kept on file at Medic Alert to be given to practitioners when they call. You can also write the

Medic Alert phone number on your MCS wallet card. Medical staff are trained to look for the tags in an emergency. The Medic Alert phone number can be contacted by practitioners at any time to access your full notes. As well as keeping a record of the things you react badly to, you can also include a pdf document with your notes. This can set out exactly the information you need practitioners to know in a clear format they can download in an emergency. If you don't have access to a computer, MCS-AWARE can email it to Medic Alert for you. If you can't tolerate the stainless steel tag, wear it over your clothes, cover it with cellulose sellotape or coat it in shellac varnish. For more details contact:

www.MedicAlert.com

Tel: 0800 581 420. Support group members can request information for practitioners from MCS-Aware.





ASK A PRACTITIONER

While our medical advisors cannot respond to individual queries, we hope to cover some frequently-asked questions in this column. Send in your questions to MCS-Aware.

I have Chronic Eczema and urticaria, asthma, allergic rhinitis. I had an anaphylactic reaction to a local anaesthetic 2 years ago and recently had a severe allergic reaction to wood smoke, ash and dust. I saw an Allergist (Allergy Specialist) 2 years ago to test for any other anaesthetics I may be allergic to but the skin test failed (skin too damaged). The Allergist said I had to go another 10 days without antihistamines (having already done 7) and then repeat the test. After 3 days I was extremely bad and the doctor had to come out. Following that a nurse had to apply steroid cream (very thickly) and I had to re-take antihistamines. The test was never re-done. I now badly need some dentistry work done on a tooth. The Dentist said it was too dangerous to go ahead without having a test done. I cannot come off antihistamines, especially following this recent allergic reaction which lasted 12 days in bed (very severe reaction because the ash/dust was still about the house and my body was still fighting it). I have read that there is the possibility of blood tests to provide allergy results. Would this be a possibility in my case for both these things?

Dr Apelles Econs, Allergy & Environmental Specialist replies:

Your predicament is becoming increasingly common: people who suffer with severe symptoms from chemical exposures, have a seriously overloaded immune system, i.e. T-lymphocytes and disturbances in the natural detoxification processes such as methylation, sulphurilation and so on. This means that the immune system has become hypersensitive to "sub-toxic" levels of chemicals and their emissions known as "volatile organic compounds"; this also coincides with the presence of heavy metals in the body and changes in the natural electro-magnetic frequencies of the body and its cells. This phenomenon tends to affect mostly susceptible individuals, because of acquired changes in their DNA, known as "epigenetics" (i.e. DNA Adducts or free-radicals). A few practical tips:

- a) It is paramount that you purify your own home, using an efficient air-filter, possibly Hepa or carbon. Remove all sources of chemical emissions, including toiletries and detergents from home; make it your "safe haven".
- b) Yes, it is possible (and in your case, the only safe option) to have blood tests instead of skin tests and continue with your antihistamines. However, please note that this test (immunoglobulin E) aims to confirm classic allergies e.g. to nuts or dust mites but is unlikely to offer any helpful information with your severe MCS reactions, whose nature is often "non-allergic", although sometimes quite severe. This type of reaction has been described as "anaphylactoid" (i.e. not true anaphylaxis).
- c) Tests which I would normally recommend include DNA adducts, lymphocyte sensitivity to heavy metals, post DMSA load test for toxic elements (urine), fat cell test for pesticides and organophosphates. All the above can be done locally and samples can be posted to specific labs in the UK or overseas.
- d) It is possible to reduce your sensitivity to various chemicals using the low-dose method of desensitisation (Miller Technique) which relies on intra-dermal testing and is pretty harmless and inexpensive.
- e) Most people with severe MCS can minimise the risk during dental work using a small dose of oral prednisolone (a steroid) for a few days, but please discuss it with your dentist and/or your family doctor.
- f) Nutritional deficiencies are rife in this group as is their inability to tolerate many oral supplements. Sometimes it is beneficial to use high potency, purified nutrients as intravenous infusions.

Note: Articles are the opinion of the respective authors and not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional or as individual medical advice. MCS-Aware encourages you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.



What's Affecting Your Health?

There have been huge changes in our environment and lifestyles over the last 50 years, with new products to make our lives easier, safer and cleaner. It is possible to react to any synthetic or natural chemical in everyday items, the most common triggers being laundry detergents, perfume, shampoo, cosmetics and cleaning products. Chemicals can enter the body through the skin, by breathing, eating or drinking and can affect virtually any body organ or system. This leads to a huge range of symptoms, from wheezing, headaches, mood swings or feeling sick, to ongoing problems like exhaustion, skin rash, depression, aches and pains.

The easiest way to diagnose chemical sensitivity is to keep a Sensitivity Diary of symptoms, activities, and to list what you eat or drink. After a couple of weeks look back and see if you can identify any recurring patterns. Once you've worked out what's triggering your symptoms, avoiding the product should help you feel a lot better. There's no need to go without, simply replace the item with an alternative. "Fragrance-free" and "environmentally -friendly" brands are less likely to contain allergic triggers. A full list of suppliers is available for all Support Group members. A summary of things you can do to reduce toxins in the home to improve your health are:

- Remove perfume and air fresheners from the house. (If you can't get rid of perfumes store them in air tight containers). No scents in your bedroom.
- Change washing powder for an eco-friendly, fragrance-free brand.
- Change cleaning products for eco-friendly, fragrance-free ones.
- Swap toiletries for eco-friendly, unscented versions. If you are severely ill just wash daily with a sponge/ flannel and water.
- No decorating. No new furnishings unless organic and untreated. When you learn more about your illness and become stable you can research materials that will not make you ill. If you react to carpets, remove them and just have floorboards with organic (or old, washed)

cotton rugs. If you can't bear to get rid of a new carpet, roll it up in a plastic bag and store in the loft, (or someone else's loft – even better!) as they take years to outgas the chemicals.

- Remove all commercial cleaning products, air fresheners, toilet fresheners, weed-killers and pesticides (including flea spray/ collars) from the house. Do not use weed-killer or pesticides (eg ant powder etc) in the garden either.
- Install a chlorine filter in your bath/ shower. You absorb more chlorine through your skin in a shower than when you drink tap water.
- Minimise the amount of plastic in your home. If you are very ill, see the helpsheet 'Creating an Allergy-Free Bedroom'.
- Remove newspapers and magazines as the printing ink contains a lot of volatile compounds. Store them in a container and read them in a well ventilated space (outside?) or use a reading box.
- Ventilate your home daily. If the outside air is very polluted try an air purifier.
- If you are sensitive to yeasts and mould, remove fruit, or store in the fridge. Get rid of houseplants as there is a lot of mould in the soil. Keep lids on rubbish bins.
- Eat as much organic food as your budget will allow, prioritise organic meat and dairy.
- Cut down on plastic packaging. When cooking and storing food avoid plastic, tin foil, cling-film, aluminium pans and non-stick pans. Use glass, ceramic, enamel and stainless steel.
- Get a water filter, or drink and cook with spring water in glass bottles (not plastic). You may be able to get a discount on bulk deliveries as it is for 'medical purposes'.

Food Sensitivities

People with multiple sensitivities usually also suffer from gut dysbiosis, where everything is out of balance, and this can result in multiple food sensitivities which makes health worse. The key way to improve is to make sure you heal the gut with suitable supplements, and rebalance the bacteria to help digestion and lower the internally-produced toxins (see page 6).

In medical terms, food intolerance is not the same as food allergy. A classic allergy involves the body producing IgE antibodies, which cause immediate and sometimes life-threatening reactions. In contrast, food intolerance does not usually involve IgE antibodies and symptoms can occur any time between the food being eaten and excreted (usually 3-4 days). IgE allergies are permanent and life-long; food intolerance is usually temporary. If you're not sure, ask your doctor to do a blood test to see if your reactions are due to an IgE allergy. If you have a food intolerance (*not* allergy) you may find you can eat small quantities of the problem food again after avoiding it for 6 weeks. (There may be a few foods that you may have to avoid for much longer). It is possible to be sensitive to any food, drink or ingredient. A lot of people find they actually crave the food they're sensitive to (possibly because it makes the body release "feel good" hormones). Common culprits include dairy, wheat, yeast, colourings and preservatives. Organising food into a rotation diet can help prevent new sensitivities or try the GAPS way of eating to heal the gut. See [www. MCS-Aware.org](http://www.MCS-Aware.org) for more information on this.

Because non-IgE sensitivity reactions can involve lots of different body systems there isn't a medical test to diagnose food intolerance. The easiest and cheapest way to find out what you're reacting to is to keep a diary of symptoms and list everything you eat and drink. After a week, look back and see if there are any patterns. Alternatively, you could try an Elimination Diet or one of the many food intolerance tests available in health centres. No test has yet proved 100% accurate for all people but they can be a good guide if used with common sense.

Once a suspect food is excluded you should notice an improvement of symptoms within 1-2 weeks. Retry the food again after 6 weeks and if there's no reaction you can happily eat it in moderation. In the meantime, replace the excluded food with an alternative to avoid malnutrition. There are plenty of wheat and dairy-free products in supermarkets and health food shops, or substitute different fruit and vegetables like cassava, yam or plantain available from Asian groceries. It is a good idea to see an experienced nutritionist who can help you improve your digestion and heal the gut to prevent a recurrence of symptoms. Help sheets for severe food intolerance are available from MCS-Aware.

Electro-HyperSensitivity

An increasing number of people are becoming sensitive to electromagnetic fields (EMFs), Wi-Fi and mobile phone frequencies. Symptoms can manifest as headaches, blurred vision, tingling, numbness, nosebleeds, palpitations, joint/muscle pains, insomnia and others. Once sensitised it is quite difficult to recover. There is no simple cure, but most sufferers find their symptoms improve when they avoid exposure. Once a sufferer has worked out what's causing their illness, they can protect themselves using shielding materials or by moving away from the source. Using an appliance less, turning it off (phones and Wi-Fi can be replaced with cabled versions), unplugging appliances when not in use, and sitting or sleeping away from problem sources can all help. Occasionally individuals can experience flu-like withdrawal symptoms for a day or two as their body re-adjusts. Many people with both Electro-Hypersensitivity (EHS) and MCS have found their electrical sensitivities improve when their chemical sensitivity is treated. Likewise, reducing exposure to EHS triggers can improve chemical and food sensitivities, as it reduces the damage to body's cells and reduces the total load on the immune and detoxification systems. Generally it's a good idea to limit your daily exposure to low level radiation:

- Unplug appliances when not in use.
- Sit at least 1m away from TV screens.
- Take a 5 minute break every hour when using a computer.
- Make sure you're not sitting or sleeping in an area affected by strong electrical fields or phone mast radiation - you can hire measuring equipment to test.
- Limit the time you hold your mobile phone next to your head - text or use the speakerphone option. Turn your phone off at night or redirect it to a landline.
- Consider a cabled internet connection instead of wireless.
- Various meters are available to measure EMF and microwave radiation, and shielding materials can be made or bought.

More information is available for products and services that measurably reduce the amount of EMF exposure, request a copy of the [EHS Directory](#) from MCS-Aware.org.

Your Say...

MCS and Benefits

I have recently lost my job due to ill health which has been ongoing and I have symptoms of MCS which was really misunderstood at my work. I am struggling to cope financially and although I don't want to claim benefits, I feel this is my only option with my health issues. I am unsure if I am entitled to anything as MCS is so misunderstood, please can you advise? Cathy

MCS-Aware has a helpsheet on 'How to Apply for Benefits' which will take you through the process. Our booklet on 'MCS Employment Guidelines' may also be helpful. Unfortunately MCS is not recognised in the UK yet except as a symptom of ME/ CFS. If you join our support group you get access to over 50 free helpsheets that may help with other everyday issues you may be struggling with.

Can methanol trigger symptoms?

I just wanted to say that I have had MCS for many years and have done a lot of my own research over the years (out of necessity!) and gradually improved my health. I also am involved with ElectroSensitivity UK, a charity helping those who are EHS.

My daughter aged 22 was diagnosed with MS two months ago . I have been researching hard into what may have triggered this and have been working with a chemist. We have come up with methanol as a possible cause and this fits in very well with my MCS as well. Methanol turns to formaldehyde in the body

and then causes havoc. It is in cigarettes (known to be a factor in causing or worsening MS), tinned and jarred fruit and veg (also bottles) and smoked fish and meats. But especially tinned tomatoes and blackcurrants and aspartame (sweetener which is in many low sugar foods and also medicines - even most children's.

Please have a look at Professor Woodrowe Monte's work. He is a retired Food Scientist from Arizona University and warned about methanol containing foods 30 years ago but he was ignored. He has just written a book called "While Science Sleeps" and has a website: thetruthaboutstuff.com

I think this will be extremely helpful for a lot of people and people need to know about this but especially if there is anyone here who has MS, Lupus, cancer, autism or rhuematiod arthritis.

Ruth.

Thanks Ruth for your interesting letter. We also have some information on our website about Formaldehyde and the everyday products that contain this chemical which can impact health.

Got something to say?
Get in touch:
E: info@mcs-aware.org
FB/ Twitter: 'MCSaware'
P: MCS-Aware,
56 Gaping Lane, Hitchin,
Herts. SG5 2JE

Food in Season:

VEGETABLES

Beetroot, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chicory, horderseradish, jerusalem artichoke, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, parsnips, potatoes, salsify, shallots, swede, , turnips, wild mushrooms

FRUIT

Apples, blood oranges, clementines, cranberries, kiwi fruit, lemons, passion fruit, pears, pineapple, pomegranate, rhubarb, satsumas, tangerines

MEAT & FISH

Duck, goose, grouse, guinea fowl, hare, mallard, partridge, pheasant, rabbit, turkey, venison, Cod, coley, dab, dover sole, gurnard, haddock, halibut, hake, lemon sole, mackerel, monkfish, plaice, red mullet, sea bass, sea bream, skate, turbot.



Gift Ideas

Create your own hand picked hampers for specific and multiple **special diets**.



Choose chocolates, gourmet **foods**, **free**-from alcoholic drinks, books and gifts.

SPECIAL DIETS DIRECTORY Devon, UK , email info@specialdietsdirectory.co.uk
Tel: 01752 863592 Mob: 07976 166764

NEW dairy and gluten free Probiotic



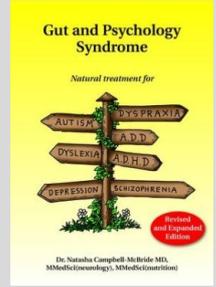
Symprove is a liquid probiotic containing 4 species of live bacterial cultures: *L. rhamnosus*, *planatarum*, *acidophilus* and *E. faecium*. The naturally occurring bacteria are grown

on an extract of germinated barley. The barley also contains a unique food source (prebiotic) although the drink itself is gluten-free.

Available from Health food stores or direct from www.symprove.com Tel. 01252 413600.

GAPS Diet Helps Rebuild Gut

The gut is thought to play an important part in the immune system, so healing the gut will have a significant affect on other areas of your health. The GAPS diet works by healing the gut wall and rebalancing the bacteria in the gut. 'Good' bacteria produce vitamins and enzymes, helping with digestion and absorption. The 'bad' bacteria produce a lot of toxins, overloading an already compromised system.



Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride's book **Gut and Psychology Syndrome**, summarises the research behind the diet and clearly outlines the plan for eating your way to better health. Try the diet for 4 weeks and see if it helps. If you already have food intolerance, then listen to your body and adapt the diet to suit you. Not everyone can tolerate the high levels of protein and fats at first, but once your system has started healing you should be able to adjust.

ISBN 0954852028

Puzzles *Sudoku from krazydad.com with permission. Answers—see p24*

6	8							
		2					5	7
	5			7	2	3	8	
			7		1	9		
7	9		3	2	4		6	1
		4	5		8			
	1	3	6	4			9	
4	7					8		
							7	4

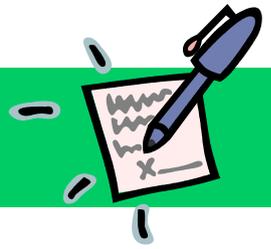
Jokes:

Q. What is a vampire’s favourite mode of transport?

Q. What kind of music do bunnies like?

Riddle:

Q. I can be cracked, made, told and played. What am I?



REVIEWS

Got something to recommend?
Tell us about it: info@mcs-aware.org



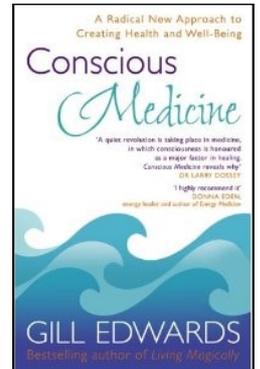
Meaco De-Humidifier—Review by Nicki

I have to dry all my washing indoors but this creates mould inside the house that I react to. (I can't tolerate the fumes from tumble driers.) I tried out the Meaco de-humidifier to remove the damp, and was quite excited to find it has a laundry setting as well. This was excellent. All my clothes were dry within 6 hours regardless of whether the house heating was on or not. The only downside is the faster they dry, the more like cardboard everything becomes, be warned!!

The Meaco is a desiccant de-humidifier. It has 3 settings so you can choose how 'dry' you want the air to be. It smelt **very** strongly of plastic to start with, and took about 6 weeks to outgas on the laundry setting. Now I can tolerate it elsewhere in the house. It is easier to tolerate when it is just on the dehumidifier setting (which is great for reducing moulds generally in the house) as the laundry setting heats up and still smells a bit. It is quiet and effective, and has an automatic shut off when the air is at the right humidity or when the water tray is full. On average I empty the water tray once a day. I was worried the unit might itself get mouldy as there is water in it all day, but so far, not a sign, and it has definitely reduced the moulds in the house. The house is also warmer when the air is drier. If you're thinking of trying one, Healthy-House.co.uk has a very good factsheet explaining the pros and cons of different brands. Check the returns policy before you buy, I found Healthy House very helpful. www.healthy-house.co.uk Tel: 0845 450 5950

Conscious Medicine by Gill Edwards— Review by Nicki

This is the book that helped me start to recover from severe chemical, food and electro-sensitivities. Gill trained as a psychologist and has an interest in complementary therapies and spirituality which some of her previous books embrace.



Puzzle Answers

6	8	7	1	3	5	4	2	9
3	4	2	9	8	6	1	5	7
9	5	1	4	7	2	3	8	6
2	3	5	7	6	1	9	4	8
7	9	8	3	2	4	5	6	1
1	6	4	5	9	8	7	3	2
8	1	3	6	4	7	2	9	5
4	7	6	2	5	9	8	1	3
5	2	9	8	1	3	6	7	4

Joke

A A blood vessel

A. Hip Hop

Riddle

A A joke!

This one however explains things in a more scientific way with a dose of quantum physics (painless!). Each chapter has an explanation written in an easy anecdotal style followed by an exercise. You can read the book straight through but I chose to use it like a workbook, stopping to practice each bit. Firstly Gill describes how to retrain the limbic part of the brain: in MCS and life in general we are all extremely stressed and the brain learns to work in a specific way to deal with this, often leaving people in a permanent fight/fight/freeze response. This was certainly true in my case; it took 2 weeks of constant 'retraining' to get everything to calm down. The next chapters concentrate on different ways to deal with trauma and emotional baggage with a variety of techniques including Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). The idea is do use all the exercises to rebalance everything and let your energy flow properly. After a few weeks I found it took less time to recover from exposures. About a month later I found I could tolerate more things and had fewer reactions. Progress has continued and I am even eating again. BRILLIANT! There are many courses for limbic retraining, but this has to be the cheapest! If you are already in tune with your body it's worth giving it a go. Available in paperback, and also as an Ebook from WHSmith online, approx. £8.



Have You Tried: Sorghum Flour

Food Family: Grasses

(Gramineae); subfamily Panicoideae and the tribe Andropogoneae (the tribe of sugar cane).

Sorghum is a **gluten-free cereal grain** that originated in Africa about 5000 years ago. Today the United States is the largest producer of sorghum. 'Sweet' sorghum is a creamy-coloured, gluten free flour that has a similar nutritional makeup to corn although it is higher in protein and fat and lower in vitamin A. Sorghum flour has a bland, slightly sweet flavour that can be beneficial for baking because it won't add an unfamiliar or distinctive taste. However, because of its lack of gluten, it does have an influence on the texture of baked goods. Gluten acts as a binder in foods, so consider adding an alternative binder such as cornstarch or tapioca starch to recipes when using sorghum flour. In addition, sorghum often produces a drier, crumbly final product. Adding extra oil or another fat source and eggs can improve the texture, and adding a leavening agent such as baking powder or baking soda will help the dough rise. Adding slightly more oil or fat and eggs to recipes prepared with sorghum blends can improve moisture content and texture.

Where to Buy:

Sorghum is now sold in many healthfood shops and can also be found at ethnic food markets. It may be listed under another name. For example, in the Indian culture sorghum flour is referred to as jowar atta. See also the 'Suppliers Directory' free to support group members.



To cook grain: 225g sorghum, 1 litre water. Rinse grain, simmer with lid on for 1 hour. Serves 4
NOTE: Do not use the grain for sprouting as the young shoots are poisonous.

You Are What You Wear: We absorb up to 60%



By Ananda Mahony

"We absorb up to 60% of what we apply to our skin" is an often cited factoid but is it actually true? Well I came across this research to show strong evidence that we do in fact absorb quite a bit of what is applied.

Rates of skin absorption of contaminants in public drinking water for example were studied by the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health. The study found that the skin absorbed an average of 64% of the total contaminant dosage.

Underarm and genitalia absorb up to 100%:

In another study the face was found to be 2-6 times more permeable than other body surfaces such as the torso. And, the underarms and genitalia were found to be even more permeable. In fact, the underarms and genitalia showed up to a 100% absorption estimate (Kasting, 2005).

The studies showed that **absorption rate varies depending on the compound**. Some examples include, caffeine, which is absorbed by the skin at 48% while DDT (a pesticide) is absorbed at 10%. Alarmingly fragrance ingredients, showed a 100% absorption rate (Robinson et al, 2000).

So there is basis to this information and in some cases, research implications are worrisome, particularly in regard to phthalates which are found in artificial fragrances, toiletries and some plastics. In any case regardless of actual percentage rates, it makes sense to know the ingredients in our skin care products so we know what we are applying and absorbing. Natural and organic products are the obvious choice as this immediately cuts out artificial preservatives, fragrances and colour compounds that are either suspected or confirmed to be harmful to us.

Ananda Mahony ND has a natural skin care educational centre online:

www.vitalenatural.com.au

Cheap and Natural Ways to Clean

There are many inexpensive, easy-to-use natural cleaning alternatives which can be used safely in place of commercial household cleaning products. Here are some ordinary, environmentally safe products which can be used alone or in combination for a wealth of household cleaning applications:

Antifungals/Disinfectants –

Grapefruit seed extract and essential oils such as lavender, clove, and tea tree oil have antiseptic properties and operate as natural fungicides. To keep mould at bay, add 1 or 2 teaspoons of essential oil to 2 cups of water in a spray bottle, or 20 drops of grapefruit seed extract to 1 pint of water. Borax mixed into a paste is a good odourless solution.

Bicarbonate of Soda - an all-purpose, non-toxic cleaner. Cleans, deodorises, removes stains, scours and softens fabrics. Baking soda works as a non-abrasive scouring cleaner on countertops and ovens, and in bathtubs and sinks. It also rids clothes of perspiration odours when used in conjunction with laundry detergent in the washer. The next time you do laundry, try adding 1/2 cup to a cup to your load. Before you vacuum, sprinkle it on your carpet as a deodoriser.

Borax - cleans, deodorises, disinfects, softens water, cleans wallpaper, painted walls and floors and is also a natural insecticide and herbicide. CAUTION: Borax (boric acid) can be toxic to small children and pets, keep well out of their reach. Always refer to safety precautions on the package. (Sodium Sesquicarbonate) is widely sold instead of Borax but it is not as good for getting rid of mould or using as a pesticide. Borax substitute also doesn't have the agent in it that removes stains and odour when used for laundry.

Castille or vegetable-based soap - unscented soap in liquid form, flakes or bars, it is biodegradable and will clean just about anything. Make your own by grating a bar of soap and dissolving in hot water.

Cornflour (cornstarch)- can be used to clean windows, polish furniture, shampoo carpets and rugs, starch clothes, absorb oil and grease.

Ethanol (ethyl alcohol) - is an excellent disinfectant.

Glycerin - good for loosening some types of stains. It can be bought at pharmacies and is often used to soften hard icing (frosting) on cakes. Rub into perfume, newsprint, or other stubborn stains on fabric or carpet, leave for two hours and rinse away. It can be derived from

vegetable or petrochemical sources.

Herbs and Essential Oils - for disinfecting and fragrance.

Lemon Juice - The acid in lemon juice neutralizes hard water deposits, dissolves build-up and dirt on wood, and tarnish on silver. Cuts through grease and removes perspiration and other stains from clothing. A bleach alternative.

Salt (sodium chloride) - an abrasive.

Washing Soda (sodium carbonate) - Cleans clothes, softens water, cuts grease and disinfects. Increases the cleaning power of soap.

Vinegar (acetic acid) - cuts grease, removes stains, mildew, wax build-up and is an excellent water softener and fabric conditioner. White (distilled malt) vinegar can be used in place of lemon juice. The infamous strong smell dissipates as the vinegar dries. Keep drains running clear by pouring down 1 cup of baking or washing soda followed by 1 cup vinegar. Leave for a few minutes then pour down hot water. Caution: do not use this method if you have recently used commercial cleaners or bleach as the vinegar can react with the chemicals and cause dangerous fumes.

NB: People with MCS or severe Candida may not tolerate vinegar, alcohol or essential oils.



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