

## What you need to know before visiting a person who has MCS and/or NRLA. . .

### **The only treatment—AVOIDANCE!**

Latex Allergy is especially dangerous because “each” exposure leads to worse reactions. Many have anaphylactic reactions to NRL, MCS, or both. The degree of reactions varies depending on the type & length of exposure (ie, direct contact, inhaled contaminated airborne particles, eating contaminated food (handled with latex gloves or exposed to balloons), eating “latex cross-reactive” foods, indirect contact & more). Both chemicals and airborne latex (ie, gloves & balloons) will contaminate everything! (and will get in ventilation system making it impossible to “avoid”).

When you’re going to be around (or visiting) anyone with NRLA or MCS, make sure you know where their emergency meds are and how to assist in using them if necessary (training videos are available on assisting with use of Epi-Pen). Mine are kept in my belly bag & in a special container on every level of my home.

Unfortunately, many (like me) reach this severity due to ignorance—not knowing enough about NRLA & MCS. Therefore, the purpose of this brochure is to hopefully help educate others so they can avoid the **misery & isolation** these illnesses bring. Be intentional about learning more!

Please note the terrific resource websites listed on the back of this brochure if you’re serious about learning more. Both sites have lists of “safe alternatives” for personal care, household & medical products and some great web-links.

The most important thing is to be informed – each website has information detailing what NRLA & MCS are and the signs & symptoms to watch for.

**ANYONE (yes, that means you too)  
can become sensitized or allergic  
at ANYTIME!**

Here are ‘some’ of the things to avoid when visiting me in my home. A more comprehensive list is available on the A.L.E.R.T. website.

Please note: it isn’t ‘safe’ for me to visit your home. This is not personal; it’s simply because there are too many things I must avoid to be relatively healthy.

### **Smoke is EXCEPTIONALLY DANGEROUS for me... it’s the double whammy—**

- ALL tobacco products
- fireplaces
- wood-burning stoves
- outdoor fires (controlled or otherwise)
- leaf burning
- candles
- campfires, etc.

Cigarettes/Cigar smoke permeates clothing & skin & breath, so not smoking around me is not enough (hand sanitizer & mouthwash work quite well on skin & breath), but clothing remains an issue.

### **Chemicals in PERSONAL CARE & HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS:**

If the word perfume or scented (natural or otherwise) is on the label of your product, don’t use it. Even breath mints, gum & minty toothpaste smells can knock me for a loop as would bug sprays & ‘body sprays’. Things you probably can’t smell affect me & make me sick too (because it’s the chemicals that make me sick)....

- soaps (liquid, bar, etc.)
- lotions
- hair care (shampoos, conditioners, sprays – mainly if wet, but many hair care products’ fragrances linger even when dry)
- deodorants
- colognes
- perfumes
- after shave
- nail polish (if fresh)
- FABRIC SOFTENER!!
- scented laundry soap
- dish soaps
- Fabreeze
- dryer sheets
- AIR FRESHENERS!! (of ANY kind!),
- incense
- couch & chair cushions

- foam pads
- household cleaners
- wet paint (and for the first few weeks after paint dries)
- new carpet
- new furniture
- candles
- chemically treated vinyl gloves, synthetic fabrics (I can only wear or be up against 100% cotton), and dry-cleaned fabrics to name a few.

Coats & sweaters are notorious for “retaining” residues of fragrances & fabric softener, so there’s a garment bag in our front closet for you to use (please place your jackets inside & zip it up).

### **Latex & natural rubber in CLOTHING & HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS:**

- kitchen and medical GLOVES
  - BALLOONS (if near balloons, whether direct or indirect, consider your clothing/hair/skin contaminated as the proteins attach to the powder and become airborne; powder-free gloves? proteins transfer to whatever they touch, especially your hands)
  - appliqués on clothing (not stitched)
  - non-skid socks
  - rubber-soled shoes
  - RUBBERBANDS!
  - elastic, spandex, computer mouse pads (proteins will travel!)
  - rubber-grip pens
  - exercise equipment
  - rubber kitchen mats & utensils
  - baby’s stuff (pacifiers, diapers, toys, teething rings, etc.)
  - non-skid throw rugs
  - candles (most emit latex as burned, plus the smoke issue making even unscented candles unsafe)
  - rubber-backed carpeting, glues in carpet & wood
  - many adhesives
  - remote control buttons
  - rubber-gripped anything!
  - CAR FLOOR MATS! (why we’ll take my car if traveling together),
  - RUBBERSTAMPS!!
  - tires (car, bike, kid’s toys)
- and the list goes on.....

## When you visit me in my home, please:

- do not wear ANY clothing that has been washed with scented laundry detergent or rinsed/dried with fabric softener (this is VERY important!)—wash with baking soda
- do not wear ANY clothing that has been near any sources of pervasive, lingering scents that have absorbed into clothing, hair, skin, paper, or any item coming from such a household or setting
- plan any shopping “after” our visit, so those contaminants don’t come into my home with you
- put shoes & jackets in designated areas (usually closed container) as quickly as possible upon entering the house
- do not sit in designated areas as they have been made “safe” for me (ie. special couch, chair, etc.)—I’ll let you know what & where.

IF you’re an overnight guest, unscented toiletries will be provided (soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc). Please leave yours at home.

## When we meet in a public place, please do not get too close if:

- you’ve been around latex balloons
- you’re wearing perfume or **anything** scented (including fabric softener!)
- you’ve got something minty in your mouth
- you’ve been shopping in a department or home improvement store same day
- you use fabric softener in your laundry

You may see me quickly putting on my face mask (if not already wearing!) or backing away (or even needing to leave the room unexpectedly & very quickly—especially if it’s a small, confined room). You may also see me using hand sanitizer after contact (ie. handshakes, hugs). **It’s because I need clean air to breathe adequately and “must” avoid exposures** (to latex & chemicals (fragrances!)).... it’s NOT personal.

If it’s a group or private get together that’s prearranged (church, lunch, etc.), **please** consider taking the same precautions as if you were coming to my home. I want to be able to spend time visiting with you, getting to know you, developing friendships, etc..

NRLA = Natural Rubber Latex Allergy  
MCS = Multiple Chemical Sensitivities



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### Resources:

A.L.E.R.T  
[www.latexallergyresources.org](http://www.latexallergyresources.org)  
MCS America  
[www.mcs-america.org](http://www.mcs-america.org)  
Latex Allergy Links  
[www.latexallergylinks.org](http://www.latexallergylinks.org)

### Support:

(yahoo groups)  
LAForum  
[mcs-america-members-support](http://mcs-america-members-support)

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What you  
should know  
before visiting  
a person  
who has...

NRLA  
&/or  
MCS