

*Scientific Study****Chemicals Affect All of Us***

**“We
should
all be
more
careful
to avoid
chemicals.”**

I'm desensitized.
I have a strong immune system.
It'll never happen to me.

These are words that people with multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) frequently hear from others when they explain their condition, request an accommodation, and look out for others by advocating for policy changes to reduce public chemical exposures. People with MCS explain that ubiquitous chemicals in our environment affect everyone and no one is immune.

We may all just one scintilla of a breath away from developing MCS. Most of us deny that this is possible. People with MCS must be susceptible, damaged in some way, or have a family history of MCS.

Now research is showing that occupational exposure to dust, gases, and fumes does affect people the same irregardless of family history.

Researchers in Sweden measured the impact of occupational exposure to dust, gases, and fumes on respiratory symptoms, obstructive lung diseases, and the use of asthma medication in a group of over 3,000 men and women they evaluated for a period of 10 years.

High exposure to various sources of dust, gas, and fumes was attributed to 35% of the symptoms reported. Further, this applied to both those with and without a family history of asthma.

The researchers conclude that, “that the relative risk of occupational exposure to pollutants is similar for both persons with and those without a family history of asthma.”

People with MCS are right on when it comes to chemical exposure. We should all be more careful to avoid chemicals, particularly fragrances, cleaning chemicals, pesticides, and herbicides. Fortunately, most of these products are not required in day-to-day life. Yet, we use them regularly.

Perhaps it's time to look at safer alternatives that get the job done just as well.

- Many food grade items such as vinegar and baking soda do an excellent job of cleaning.
- Fragrances are totally unnecessary in any product and may be reserved for special events.
- Herbicides can be eliminated by simply pulling weeds when they begin to grow.
- Pesticides often contribute to insect problems and eliminating their use in favor of natural alternatives can not only be healthier, but also do a better job of eliminating and preventing infestations.

Reference

Hedlund U, Rönmark E, Eriksson K, Lundbäck B, Järholm B. Occupational exposure to dust, gases and fumes, a family history of asthma and impaired respiratory health. *Scand J Work Environ Health*. 2008 Oct;34(5):381-6.

