

First Steps: Take Action When Experiencing MCS



It can be life changing to be diagnosed with a chronic illness. For people diagnosed with MCS, the lack of awareness about the condition in the medical community can make it even more difficult.

Step 1: Getting ready to act

It is overwhelming when you realize that your health depends on your product choices, and the choices made by others. Being ill at the same time as having to make these changes, adds to the burden. You look around and wonder where to start, what to do, what can you rely on and whom you can depend on for reliable information. You will soon begin to understand that there are different levels of tolerance and you have to find what works for you. To help you with this daunting task, we have attempted to put together some useful tips.

Take inventory of the products that you currently have. Remove the scented items and products from your home including personal, laundry and cleaning products. Don't store them in your garage, the pollutants can continue to enter your living space and affect you. Don't dispose them in the garbage either! You can drop these products at disposal centers of the municipality instead of dumping them down the drain and allowing them to enter the waterways.

Create a shopping list for healthy, fragrance-free products that you need. These will include personal

Program name	Logo	Origin of the program
UL ECOLOGO		North America
Ecocert		France
EWG		United States
Green Seal		United States
Ecolabel		European Union



products like soap shampoo, conditioner and deodorant, cleaning supplies, and laundry detergents. The ASEQ-EHAQ [Eco Living Guide](#) is a great resource to check out to find suitable products. Buy the smallest packaging to ensure that you can tolerate these items. It is better to go without rather than continue using a product that still has fragrances, perfume, parfum, or toxic products. Try the do-it-yourself tips in the Eco Living Guide if you are extremely sensitive to chemicals.

Beware of Greenwashing! Products that possess nature scenes and claim that they are green, clean, eco, or natural may not be better options. Instead, look for Eco certification labels like Ecologo and Ecocert. These logos in Canada can help to verify that the products are safer options.

Step 2: Create a safe haven in your bedroom

Having at least one safe, healthy room in your house will help you take refuge while you get the rest of the home healthy.

To remove the previously used products, it is a good idea to have someone wipe down your walls with natural soap and a microfiber cloth. Rinse frequently.

Ensure that there is no mould in the room, or in the bathroom if it is nearby.

Make sure to vacuum and dust with a wet cloth frequently, which will prevent the dust from becoming airborne. Avoid scented oils and potpourri. Proper ventilation is also important, so keep the windows open if possible, and close them for example when neighbors are doing laundry that might cause symptoms.

The products and surfaces in your bedroom are equally as important, from bedding, to your mattress, to your furniture and closets, you can learn more about how to ensure these spaces remain safe and healthy by reading more here: <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/environmental-sensitivities/how-to-best-manage-environmental-sensitivities-es/how-to-best-manage-es/>

Remember your bedroom is your Oasis. It is important to evaluate the items you bring into this room. Always verify:

1. Is it fragrance-free?
2. Do you really need it in the bedroom?
3. Will it collect dust?



4. Could it trigger or worsen your sensitivities?
5. Listen to your body!

Step 3: the rest of your home

The important things to consider for your bedroom are just as important in the rest of your home.

For the home in general, ventilation is key. Keep doors and windows open (unless you live in a polluted area) and use a ventilation system if you live in a tightly sealed home. Do not allow smoking in your home, and utilize exhaust fans and range hoods. Make sure to remove garbage instead of relying on air fresheners. Vacuum often, and clean carpets with natural solutions like baking soda rather than conventional carpet cleaners. Make sure to repair leaks and to dry the wet materials within 48 hours in order to prevent mold. Install a bathroom fan, and make sure the tub and shower are sealed properly. If the seal develops mould it must be changed. Do not allow incense or scented candles in your home.

In the kitchen, use organic options as much as possible. Fragrance free and non-toxic cleaners are important particularly on surfaces that may come in contact with the food. Avoid non-stick cookware, keep the kitchen sponge clean and dry between uses and make sure the kitchen towels are fresh and clean before drying dishes.

Do not park your cars or store any items that off gas such as cans of paint in your garage. These fumes can potentially enter your home and may make you ill. You can also now use your garage to off gas new products, but you may need to install an exhaust fan so that these chemicals don't enter your home.

Install air and water purifiers to reduce the pollutants that may affect your health. Make sure to keep track of your filters so that you can replace them before they are fully soiled.

For more information about taking care of your home and maintaining safe and healthy spaces read more at <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/environmental-sensitivities/how-to-best-manage-environmental-sensitivities-es/how-to-best-manage-es/>

There are many challenges that may arise due to exposures and how to manage them. ASEQ-EHAQ is here to help as best we can.