



Month of May

Take back your power!

The Month of May is the month for raising awareness and education for multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS). This month can increase visibility and support by the sharing of knowledge about the MCS condition. With many unmet needs experienced in this community, the Month of May is incredibly important to ensure that people are educated and aware of the condition including accommodations for the disability such as fragrance-free spaces and least-toxic choices for all applications.

With so many unmet needs and a lack of general awareness in the general population, people experiencing MCS can face many challenges. While these aspects can take a toll on the individual, the collective problem is the way people with this disability are treated. The ignorance which leads to a lack of accommodation can lead to exposures and trigger symptoms, and the way people are treated because they have this disability is an issue that must be addressed.

MCS on the other hand is a 'life' condition, a way of experiencing life due to your biology. Like having blonde hair, or brown eyes, these things are not good or bad, but are just an aspect of your body. Like anyone, your body has specific needs. Those needs vary for every single human being and can change with allergies and other health conditions. While the transition to learning what your body needs such as

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healthy environments, and clean air can be a challenging process, learning to support these needs is one way that you can learn to accept and even appreciate yourself and your body.

While self-acceptance is important to find, you will likely feel many emotions, including negative ones due to the frustrations and other feelings that can come with lack of accommodation, lack of awareness, and the symptoms that are experienced upon exposures. These feelings are all valid. Your experiences are valid.

As a person that experiences MCS, many of the changes that you make in your life not only help to support your own journey, but also help to reduce the negative impacts on the environment. These changes are critical to support our society as we pursue a sustainable future and healthier future in which everyone has access to clean air, water, and food.

You have so much to offer and are such a valuable member of the community. Your skills, talents, knowledge and experiences add so much to the world. These facets of your identity help you support yourself, and your community towards a better and healthier future. Your knowledge even just from your experiences with MCS, learning how to choose products, how to maintain clean and healthy spaces all play such a crucial role in how we can make changes towards sustainability.

With this in mind, no one should ever be afraid or ashamed to submit a request for accommodation. Alternative products should be normalized, including ensuring that people use the least-toxic product selections.

The month of May is a great opportunity to show the world who you are and raise awareness about the disability of MCS.

How can I take action for the rights of people with MCS?

During the Month of May it is especially important to get involved and make a difference to achieve universally accessible spaces for people with MCS. There are many ways that you can get involved to take action and educate.

For some this could mean attending events or getting your family and friends to attend events on MCS and the social realities. This Month of May we have three new events that you can share and attend. The first event on May 6 called “MCS and Anxiety: Dispelling the Myth” will have Dr. Ellie Stein as a speaker. From her 20 years + experience as a psychiatrist treating patients with MCS, Dr Stein will explain why, although some people with MCS (as with any medical condition) can have mental health symptoms, MCS is not a psychiatric disorder. When patients with MCS are misdiagnosed as having a mental health disorder, their physical symptoms are dismissed, and they are offered incorrect treatment. Be sure to register to be able to attend. You can register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAlcO-upj8qHdPXQzVwVIh7DaRNemHTLQnD>

The second event on May 12 is called “Multiple Chemical Sensitivity: Top 10 Myths”. This talk will be given by Dr. John Molot. Dr. Molot reviews the evidence-based biological mechanisms to explain MCS and debunks the 10 most common arguments used against the condition by those who deny accommodation for the disability, third party insurance claims, proper health care and social support. You can register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwkd-2tqTsuHNwEjUtMgBiq268baHKE3Wk7>

The third event on May 30 is called “Practical tips to reduce exposures for people experiencing Multiple Chemical Sensitivity”. The speaker for this event will be Dr. Domenica Tambasco. Dr. Tambasco will present practical tips on how to prepare, prevent and manage commonly encountered exposures in four domains: home, work, community, and travel and transportation. You can register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUpcO6trj0qE9xhZOH_kaTC_ptS6xOYjZl6

In addition to attending different events and learning so that you can effectively educate others on this condition, you can also contact your elected officials to ensure they are aware of this issue and will act to support this community. [When contacting elected officials](#), you can discuss the importance of healthy and affordable housing for

this community, fragrance-free healthcare, appropriate accommodations, and other issues that need attention on a national scale.

ASEQ-EHAQ has also created 2 easy to use email forms. These forms only require you to add your name and email address in order to contact the government about important issues concerning people with MCS. The first email will send a message to governmental officials in Quebec to remove the INSPQ report from their website. The current report will do a great deal of harm to the MCS community, since it did not consider expert knowledge, lived experience on the condition, and failed to include a number of important studies on MCS. This action is important for everyone, not just people in Quebec or Canada, since this report is already being used by other governments to inform policy and create new research which will continue to create harm if it relies on the conclusion of the INSPQ. Act now by clicking here: <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/action/>

The second action will send a letter across Canada to inform the government about the importance of safe and healthy housing for people experiencing MCS. With disproportionately low socioeconomic status, finding housing in general is a challenge for people with MCS. Finding a housing that is safe and healthy without exposures should not have to be difficult. We need healthy and affordable housing options across the country, so that people with MCS are safe, and healthy especially in their own home. You can act now by clicking here: <https://aseq-ehaq.ca/en/housing-for-mcs/>

ASEQ-EHAQ is always looking for new volunteers to get involved as well. If you are interested in volunteering, or know someone who is interested please contact office@aseq-ehaq.ca.

To stay up to date with how you can get involved follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter!