

SEEDS OF HEALTH

SOW SEEDS TO REGAIN YOUR HEALTH

Here are some basic tips often given to people suffering from environmental sensitivities. Although these are easier said than done, following them will bring about positive results according to the testimonials of many people suffering from environmental sensitivities.

Sleep

- Go to bed at a regular time, in dark and quiet surroundings.
- Turn your bedroom into an oasis exempt of all triggering agents that cause reactions and that are frequently linked to environmental sensitivities (perfume, chemical cleaning products, electronic equipment, mould, carpets, flame retardants in mattresses, curtains and furniture, etc.).
- Protect your neck while sleeping by using a pillow to maintain a space between the jawbone and the collarbone.

Environment

- Fill out a questionnaire on your exposure history.
An English version is available at:
www.ocfp.on.ca/docs/committee-documents/taking-an-exposure-history.pdf
A French translation is available at:
www.HypersensibiliteEnvironnementale.com
- In your environment, look for triggers or factors that increase your sensitivity.
- Minimize exposure to actual and potential air triggers by either eliminating them at the source in ventilation or filtration systems, or by leaving the premises.

- Avoid or minimize the intake of caffeine, alcohol, food colourings and additives.
- To avoid the negative health effects from exposure to food-borne contaminants, eat lots of fruits and vegetables, and also organic and local produce as much as possible.
- Eat organic and low-fat meats and dairy products.
- Minimize the intake of fish high in mercury (e.g. swordfish, shark, fresh or frozen tuna, certain species of wild fish).
- Drink six to eight glasses per day of spring or filtered water.
- Store food and water in glass or ceramic containers.

Exercise/training

- Keep a log of your symptoms and activities.
- Set up a training program based on your tolerance and gradually increase the pace as your energy improves (e.g. increase your walking period from ten to eleven minutes).
- Start with stretching exercises in the morning, afternoon and after a shower, followed by walking sessions. Gradually increase the effort exerted.

Diet/drugs

- You can take multivitamins and minerals, but follow recommended doses.
- Eat at three- to four-hour intervals.
- Eat foods that have been processed as little as possible, that are easy to prepare and assimilate, and that can be frozen in individual servings.
- Get tested for any potential vitamin or mineral deficiencies and consult a health care professional specializing in environmental sensitivities before supplementing (in cases other than daily multivitamin and mineral intake).

Support

Medical

- View symptoms as warning signs.
- Alleviate symptoms with self-care (e.g. sodium bicarbonate or Epsom salt baths, hot or cold compresses, acupuncture, massages).
- Keep abreast of newly identified symptoms and environmental triggers.
- Meticulously look for empathetic health care professionals who have an open mind about environmental sensitivities and are available to provide care. Inform them of your specific needs.
- Wherever you are receiving treatment, ask health professionals and their staff to avoid wearing scented products.
- Explain your condition and request the first appointment of the day in order to avoid other patients who use scented products.

Self/spiritual

- Identify activities that help you feel better (e.g. yoga, tai chi, music, art, audio books, prayer).
- Acquaint yourself with progressive relaxation, deep breathing, positive imagery or meditation.
- Accept the loss of your old way of life.
- Take care and be patient with yourself. Cultivate self-esteem and self-worth.
- Seek out new goals, new sources of motivation and of recognition.
- Explore ways to develop a sense of community. For example, contact self-help groups.

Family/social

- If you know a health care professional you trust, who is aware of your state of health and is supportive, together clearly identify your needs. If you think it would be helpful, include relatives at an appointment to discuss your needs.
- If you are not electrosensitive, have frequent and brief contact by phone and/or email with friends and relatives to avoid isolating yourself.
- If you are electro sensitive, seek face-to-face contact. If you need to send an email, ask a friend for help.
- Know the symptoms of depression. From a psychological standpoint, your state of health is making you live through very difficult situations. Do not hesitate to seek help from someone who knows and understands your condition or from the ASEQ-EHAQ (Environmental Health Association of Québec).

Workplace

- Request the material safety data sheets (MSDS) of the products used at work and show them to your physician. Inform your employer of concerns raised, in written form, with your doctor's signature. Also notify your union representative and the health and safety committee supervisor.

WHEN
THE ENVIRONMENT
MAKES YOU ILL

Need to
understand,
need
to act

Based on the document SEEDS of health © Dr Lynn Marshall (2003).

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