

The Multiple Chemical Sensitivities Syndrome Letter



Dear Family/Friends/Others,

My name is Gisele McDiarmid. I am a Certified Professional Health and Life Coach Specialist, with a background in Nursing and a B.A. in Psychology. I help people diagnosed with Central Sensitivities Syndromes (CSS).

I am writing this letter to explain to you a very serious, chronic, complex, and disabling illness that also happens to be invisible. This illness is Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (also called Multiple Environmental and Chemical Sensitivities, or ES/MCS). The person who has given you this letter has been diagnosed and is living with this very challenging illness.

ES/MCS is a complex chronic illness that the medical community recognizes as real, even if on the surface it appears to be “invisible”. We say that it is invisible because while the disease is happening inside the body, the person will tend to look normal on the outside.

MCS Friends ¹ states that:

- The symptoms are reproducible with repeated (chemical) exposures.
- The condition is chronic.
- Low levels of exposure (lower than previously or commonly tolerated) result in manifestation of syndrome.
- The symptoms improve or resolve when the incitants are removed.
- Responses occur to multiple chemically unrelated substances.
- Symptoms involve multiple organ systems.

Doctors and researchers agree that every person with ES/MCS has a unique set of symptoms, the intensity of which can vary. People living with ES/MCS will negatively react to environmental chemical exposures, like odors/scents (such as perfumes, scented products, air fresheners, smoke of any kind – cigarette, burning wood, etc. – solvents, cleaning agents, VOCs from new carpets, new furniture, new cars or new building materials, car exhaust, air pollution, plastics, etc.).

People living with ES/MCS can become adversely affected by various foods, food additives, fillers, medications, mercury in dental fillings, even natural products such as supplements, organic natural creams and lotions. They can also react to natural elements from their environment, such as the forest, trees, cut grass, flowers, pets, etc.

ES/MCS sufferers are sometimes referred to as “canaries”. This comes from the way coal miners used canaries to detect carbon monoxide in coal mines, since it could not be detected by the human nose alone, as it had no smell. The miners would send a canary in the mine, if it came back out they knew that it was safe for them to go in; if however, the canary didn’t come back out this meant that the level of carbon monoxide was unsafe, and the miners knew to not go into the shaft.

People with ES/MCS bear the brunt of experiencing a myriad of physical symptoms to what the rest of us cannot detect as harmful to our health. However, the mere fact that we might not be experiencing symptoms is not a reflection of their safety. On the contrary, our modern-day ES/MCS canaries might be warning us of the internal harm to our health that we could be experiencing while still not yet being aware of them until the damage has become far advanced.

Symptoms and Treatment of ES/MCS

People living with ES/MCS can experience a myriad of physical reactions that look like allergies. For example: watery eyes, runny nose, frequent unexplained nosebleeds, rashes, numbness, swelling, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, asthma, throat and tightening of the airways, even anaphylactic shock. They can also experience fatigue, brain-fog, and even pain that comes and goes for no apparent reason. Some develop symptoms whenever they are around electronic devices like a computer or cell phone, this is called Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity. On the outside, the person living with ES/MCS may appear healthy and normal, however the illness affects numerous functions inside their body, making them chronically ill. This is one of the reasons why ES/MCS is called an “invisible” illness.

You can imagine just how frustrating it can be for them to live like this all the time. So please be kind to the person you know who has ES/MCS and realize what doctors and researchers all agree on: ES/MCS is not laziness, procrastination, selfishness or malingering. It isn’t a lack of will power either. They are not just being fussy, difficult or uncompromising. They are also not trying to manipulate those around them. ES/MCS is a real physical illness that for now is not fully understood, but the hope is there for an eventual treatment and maybe even a cure someday.

All the reactions experienced by a person living with ES/MCS must be taken seriously and should be treated with care and consideration. **If the person with MCS begins to complain that their throat is tightening up, help them administer their prescribed Epi-Pen if they have one, otherwise please take them to the nearest Emergency Department as quickly as possible for immediate medical care.**

Often, people with MCS may also experience ongoing generalized fatigue and sometimes unspecific generalized physical pain. This is because living with ES/MCS takes its toll on the body’s central nervous system, which affects the immune system, hormones, digestive system, etc. Long term, ES/MCS simply wears down the body of the person living with it.

But unlike allergies, sensitivities may not appear on the typical allergy tests administered by a doctor, and sensitivities also cannot be treated using the well-established options for allergies. Instead, doctors will prescribe an “avoidance” program, where the ES/MCS patient will be asked to avoid exposing themselves to the reaction-causing substance(s) – often called “triggers”. Depending on the healthcare practitioner, some treatments may include: detoxification, elimination protocols, medications, injections, IVs, or “neutralizing” doses of foods or sublingual drops. The treatments tend to take a long time, however with determination and discipline, a person can improve their health status in the long run.

Living with ES/MCS

ES/MCS has a way of gradually becoming worse. The person with ES/MCS tends to react to a growing list of elements over time. This has the effect of making their ‘safe place’ in the world smaller and smaller. And as their world

begins to shrink more and more over time, the individual can end up feeling very sad, frustrated, lonely and isolated from the joy and happiness they would have otherwise shared with you and everyone else who means something to them.

Please forgive them in advance if they have to cancel on you at the last minute, and please do not hold it against them. They sincerely hope that you will continue inviting them again in the future, and they hope even more that they will be able to show up most of the time at some point in time.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter today. It means a great deal to the person who gave it to you, as they hope that together you can work through this thing, you and them. Please understand that they are just like you: they have dreams, goals and hopes for their present and future; they also need to be respected, supported, encouraged, nurtured and loved.

Additional Resources:

- ✚ For more information visit my website: <https://www.giselemcdiarmidcoaching.com>
- ✚ To reach out please email me at: gisele@gmcdiarmid.com

- ✚ Alternative Therapies for the Treatment of Allergic Diseases:
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/alternative-therapies-for-allergies-and-asthma-82768>
- ✚ Food Additives:
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/allergy-to-food-additives-and-preservatives-82899>
- ✚ Multiple Chemical Sensitivity in Fibromyalgia and ME/CFS:
<https://www.verywellhealth.com/chemical-sensitivity-in-fibromyalgia-716170>
*Source – Verywell Health, <https://www.verywellhealth.com/>

Reference:

1. <http://www.mcsfriends.org/what-is-mcs/>

Recommended Reading:

- ✚ Dr. John Molot MD, 12,000 Canaries Can't Be Wrong, What's Making us Sick and What We Can Do About It, ECW Press; 1 edition, Canada, (2014), 336 pages.

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