



How I Recovered from Multiple Chemical Sensitivities



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Lemons to Lemonade



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In 1978, I had the worst experience of my life, which turned out to be the greatest blessing: I became aware of toxic chemicals when I was diagnosed with an immune system disorder commonly known as Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS).

It was the worst experience of my life because it caused everything in my home to make me sick, and the greatest blessing because it made me aware that there are toxic chemicals—many toxic chemicals—in the world that are making me and everyone else sick. Because I became aware of this fact, I could do something to improve my health, and help others improve their health, too.

At that time, there wasn't much known about Multiple Chemical Sensitivities or how to treat it. I was one of the first to be diagnosed.

At that time, I was told that I would be sensitive to chemicals for the rest of my life, and I had to learn to live with it. Today I know that MCS is a condition, not a disease. It is a condition that is the result of toxic chemical exposure, a condition that can be improved by reducing toxic exposure and detoxing the body, if permanent damage has not been done.

This ebook contains my personal story of struggling with MCS, and the things I did that resulted in my successful recovery. It is my belief that others can recover, too.

My book
Toxic Free
is a quick start guide
to removing toxic
chemicals from your
home and body



**How I Recovered From
Multiple Chemical Sensitivities**

Contents

Recovery .....	.4
My Story		
My Early Exposure to Toxic Chemicals .....	.7
How I Discovered I Had MCS .....	.9
Provocative-Neutralization Testing .....	.11
The Turning Point .....	.12
Learning About Chemicals in My Home .....	.14
The Importance of a “Clean” Environment .....	.16
Attitude Adjustment .....	.18
Maintenance .....	.20
The Seven Essentials of Recovery		
Your Body is Designed for Health .....	.22
#1 Live in a Nontoxic Home .....	.23
#2 Eat Nourishing Organically Grown Food .....	.24
#3 Drink Lots of Pure Water .....	.27
#4 Move Your Body Every Day .....	.29
#5 Use Life Enhancing Therapies .....	.30
#6 Benefit from the Power of Mind and Spirit .....	.31
#7 Surround Yourself with Support .....	.33
Multiple Chemical Sensitivities and Immune System Dysregulation34
About Debra Lynn Dadd .....	.48
More .....	.49

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

Recovery

"Recovery" has several definitions. I'm referring to "restoration or return to health from sickness" (definition #3 in The American College Dictionary, 1956).

I have not only regained the ability to have the life I choose, but my life today is even better than it was prior to the challenge of MCS. I am happy, productive, was married for 24 years (and fully expect to be married again), able to do anything that I choose to do, and tolerate all environments I need and want to be in. I can drive my car, shop, travel, eat in restaurants, go out with friends, and anything else that I want to do without having symptoms.

I remember clearly the moment I decided I had recovered. It was in 1987. After seven years of struggling with MCS, I determined I was well enough to attempt a trip to Europe. After a month of flying on airplanes, riding in taxis, sleeping in hotel rooms, and eating in restaurants, I had no symptoms. I had proven to myself that I could live without the extreme measures to avoid chemicals I had been taking. My immune system had recovered enough that I could go out into the world and be exposed to the normal amount of chemicals that exist in modern life.

Though now, almost thirty years later, I continue live in a nontoxic home, I do so because I enjoy it, and with the motivation of wanting to sustain the health of my body and all life on Earth. Why expose myself and

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

others to substances that are inherently antagonistic to life, when I can surround myself with materials that contribute to sustaining life? I'm still careful about extraordinary exposures to toxic chemicals (like being directly sprayed with a pesticide), but that kind of exposure is harmful to even otherwise "healthy" people.

Now that I am recovered, I no longer make every decision around avoiding all toxic exposures, as I did when I had MCS. I no longer am concerned that everything I might do could result in a reaction. I no longer limit my activities based on possible chemical exposures. I no longer lie disabled in bed, having all my attention on how I am going to get through this misery.

To me, being free of symptoms, being free of the worry about symptoms, having the freedom to do anything I want in my life, having enough health to have a life is recovery from the limitations imposed by MCS. And so I consider myself "recovered."

Health is the proper relationship between the microcosm, which is man, and the macrocosm, which is the universe. Disease is a disruption of this relationship.

—Dr. Yeshe Donden, physician to the Dalai Lama

The ultimate cause of human disease is the consequence of our transgression of the universal laws of life.

—Paracelsus

**How I Recovered From
Multiple Chemical Sensitivities**

*My
Story*

My Early Exposure to Toxic Chemicals

I had grown up around a lot of chemicals. My mother was one who wanted everything modern and new. We used toxic cleaning products and pesticides, drank tap water, ate fast food and packaged foods with artificial additives and preservatives (and I ate a lot of sugar), wore perfume and used other scented products, slept on polyester-cotton sheets on synthetic mattresses and most of our furniture was plastic. I grew up in a modern American middle class home.

When I left home to attend San Francisco State University, I initially lived in an old apartment with hardwood floors. But when I left school in 1977, I moved in to a newly-renovated apartment in San Francisco, with a gorgeous view of the Golden Gate Bridge. It also had brand new wall-to-wall synthetic carpets and polyester drapes. When the setting sun warmed the drapes, they smelled horrible. The kitchen had new particleboard cabinets that reeked of formaldehyde and a soft vinyl linoleum floor. Since it was a studio apartment, I bought a modern sofa bed that was essentially a big piece of

fireproofed foam that folded up. I still slept on polyester-cotton sheets with a polyester fill pillow.

I began a cycle of not being able to fall asleep at night and then not being able to get up in the morning. My normal wake-up time was around 7:00am, but in this new apartment, it was hard to get up. I would wake up groggy and fall back to sleep. When I finally did manage to get up, I would take a shower in chlorine vapors and read the morning paper, which at that time smelled strongly of printer's ink. I would then dress in my polyester and acrylic clothes and put on my scented deodorant and cosmetics, then spray my body with perfume. Finally, I would sit down to practice at my piano, which had recently been refinished.

With this nightly insomnia, I was never able to get enough sleep, and so was constantly fatigued and lacked motivation. I was usually depressed and had strong self-doubts. Much of the time I felt confused and disoriented. I began eating obsessively and gained weight. I went to a doctor

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

to help me lose weight. He gave me weekly shots of "vitamins," which did make me feel better and I did lose weight. In retrospect, I suspect those vitamins were actually drugs.

In early 1978, I became engaged. My fiance lived in Berkeley, in a beautiful old house that had been converted into apartments. There I had my first exposure to gas heat. I remember the heater. It was an old freestanding heater that had been placed in front of a fireplace that no longer worked. I could see the gas flames burn and all the combustion by-products went directly into the room. Though we got along well in other places, whenever I would go visit him at his house, we would frequently quarrel. and I would often cry uncontrollably and become hysterical.

Since we planned to live in that apartment after we married, I began redecorating it. I painted the kitchen with oil-based paint (which is now illegal in California because of the amount of volatile organic chemicals they release into the air). In the bathroom, the shower had been

constructed with cement walls that had been painted instead of tiled. Much of the paint was chipping off, so in preparation for tiling, I put toxic paint stripper all over the shower, then stood in that small cubicle with a razor blade and scraped all the paint off, inch by inch.

Many years later, while writing my book **Toxic Free**, I learned that my body actually started to be contaminated with toxic chemicals *before birth*. This I found from reading *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, which was published in 1962. As early as 1944 it was known that the pesticide DDT was already ubiquitous on the planet, present in every living thing. DDT was banned in 1972 because of its toxic effects.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

How I Discovered I Had MCS

In the midst of this year of being on my own for the first time, and becoming engaged, I learned that my mother was about to die from cancer. She had tried many treatments, but now the doctors told her that her time was short, and I moved back to my parents' toxic house to take care of her during her last days. I moved back just in time to spend the last month of her life with her, and then found that the real reason I needed to be there was to care for my father after her death.

Later I found out that that the peaceful little suburban subdivision that I lived in from age seven to twenty-one was downwind from a chemical refining plant. It was far enough away that we didn't notice it, but the wind carried its pollution right in to our neighborhood. At the same time my mother died, other neighbors also had cancer—enough that our neighborhood was designated a "cancer cluster." My mother and I were both exposed to the same chemicals. She died of cancer and I developed MCS.

It was a time of extreme stress. My mother had died. My engagement had ended. I wasn't sleeping and I was overeating. Life was pretty bleak.

One night, shortly after my mother died, I was sitting at the piano, playing the second movement of Brahms' Piano Sonata in F minor. It is a very beautiful and moving piece of music that could bring tears to anyone's eyes, but I started crying uncontrollably. I just couldn't stop crying.

Now I had plenty of reason to cry, but my father saw it differently. While my mother was living, he had wanted her to have intravenous vitamin C treatments. The hospital wouldn't administer the treatments, so he found a doctor who would. The doctor was one of the first to practice what is called "clinical ecology" or "environmental medicine." While waiting for my mother to get her vitamin C, he would watch the patients undergoing a procedure called "provocative-neutralization testing" in which the patient

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

would be given a drop of a diluted chemical and symptoms would turn on. Then they would be given more of the same chemical in different dilutions until the symptoms would turn off. He would sit there and watch the symptoms turn on and off. One of the symptoms was hysterical crying. He put two and two together and said to himself, "This is what is wrong with my daughter."

He suggested that I go see this doctor, but I would have none of it (I learned later that one of my symptoms to chemical exposure was a refusal to do anything to help myself). So he just kept learning more and more about chemical sensitivity until the moment arrived when I could consider it for myself.

So that night—I remember this so clearly—I was sitting at the piano crying uncontrollably, and my father came over and gave me a glass of water with bubbles in it.

"What's that?" I asked between tears.

"It's Alka Setlzer Gold," he said, "Just drink it." He had learned that drinking Alka Seltzer Gold would stop a chemical reaction.

"No," I screamed. "I'm not going to drink this," I threw the glass against the wall, splattering it's contents, and got up from the piano.

My father calmly fixed another glass of Alka Seltzer Gold, wrestled me to the floor, and held my nose until I opened my mouth. I choked on a few swallows.

In less than a minute, I stopped crying. I felt perfectly calm. Though the circumstances of my life gave me reason to cry, one minute I was crying and the next minute I wasn't. It was like a storm was raging inside me and the next minute it had vanished.

This scared me. The next day I went to the doctor to get tested.

Provocative-Neutralization Testing

As I've already described, provocative-neutralization testing is a method by which doctors can clinically "turn on" symptoms to chemicals and turn them off. If one had symptoms to the test chemical, the doctor considers the patient to be sensitive to it. One of the drawbacks of this method is that it was easy to turn the symptoms on, but not so easy to turn them off, unless you had exactly the right dose.

I tested positive to most of the common chemicals, including formaldehyde and perfume. At that time, the treatment was to give the patient small bottle of antigen to take under the tongue throughout the day. The idea was that the correct dose would neutralize the patient's symptoms and he or she could live a "normal" symptom-free life while still living with those chemicals.

The antigen preparations were made, as many drug preparations are, with preservatives, usually formaldehyde or phenol. So in addition to the chemicals I was exposed to in my environment, I

was also given doses of chemicals throughout the day that were supposed to neutralize those chemicals, and in addition, even more chemicals in the form of preservatives.

I took the antigens because the doctor told me to. I got sicker and sicker and sicker, so I stopped taking them.

Later, after my father and I moved to another city, I went to another clinical ecologist and we started the round of testing chemicals all over again, this time with preservative-free antigens. We also tested foods, pollens and animal dander, molds, and many other things, including the hormones in my own body. By that time, my immune system was very damaged and it was extremely difficult to test me. The tester could turn on my symptoms, but had a hard time turning them off. We never found a dose to end the test for hormones. In addition to my chemical sensitivity, I subsequently had many years of "unbalanced hormones" that resulted in their own set of symptoms and conditions.

The Turning Point

What is being overlooked with this approach is the cause of the symptoms. Provocative-neutralization testing can be a good diagnostic tool, but the resulting antigen treatment is designed only to relieve symptoms. I was still being exposed to chemicals that were causing damage to my body.

About a year after my mother died, in the summer of 1979, my father finally sold his house and he and I moved to a condominium in Oakland, California. It was on the street floor, next to a stop sign. All day long, cars would stop and start and their exhaust would come in the house through our open windows. It had new carpets and paint, and I further redecorated by applying a white finish to a wall of wood paneling, painting all the kitchen and bathroom cabinets white, laying a new vinyl floor in the kitchen, and applying self-stick vinyl shelf paper to the entire interior of every cabinet.

I was already very sick and all these chemical exposures made things even worse. I now had constant headaches, insomnia every night and taking a shower made me feel faint. At times I

would just "space out"--I would be talking with someone one minute and the next minute I wouldn't know where I was. I had strong, sudden uncontrollable urges to eat--mostly sugary junk foods--and kept gaining weight.

By Christmas 1979 I was practically disabled. My father, once again, identified the problem perfectly. He gave me a copy of a little book--I don't remember the title--about how food allergies make people gain weight. I didn't know anything about food allergies then, but I read the whole book cover-to-cover the day after Christmas. It recommended going on a fast and then eating foods one by one to identify which foods caused symptoms.

Going on a fast was easier said than done, for it required having pure water to drink. At this point I was severely addicted to sugar and could not function without it. I remember falling out of bed and crawling to the kitchen to get cookies, so I could stand up and drive to the store to buy water. But there was no water bottled in glass

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

except sparkling mineral water, so I bought a case of Perrier and started my fast.

For four days, I went through agony. It really was like a drug addict or alcoholic going through withdrawals. But on the fifth morning I woke up and felt great! My mind was clear, my body had a lot of energy. I jumped out of bed and went for a long walk. I had a new life for the new year.

By doing the fast, I could see that foods affected the way my body felt, my emotions, and my ability to think. Until this point, I wasn't aware of any connection between my body and its environment.

After my fast, I began to eat foods one by one and write down my symptoms in a notebook. Sometimes the reactions were immediate, other times they were delayed. After each food, I had to take a laxative to get the food entirely out of my body before I tested the next food. This was not the most fun I've ever had.

But I did end up with sixteen foods I could eat without any reaction at all. I don't remember the whole list, but it included pecans, sweet potatoes, butter, and cream cheese. I had no cuisine. I just made a plan and ate the foods in a rotation so that I ate each food at four-day intervals (doctors say that food allergies develop from eating the same food too frequently--spacing foods at four-day intervals allows all the residues from each food to leave the body before it is eaten again).

I ate this way for a year before I introduced any new foods. This may sound extreme, but it worked. At the end of a year of abstaining from all foods that caused symptoms, I was able to eat most of them. I was very careful to eat a variety of foods and eat them as infrequently as I could, so as to not develop another allergy to them.

Learning About Chemicals in My Home

One day, while sitting in my doctor's office, I started talking with another patient. She asked me if I was still sleeping on polyester-cotton sheets. I replied I was and asked why. This was the first time anyone had suggested to me that I find out where the toxic chemicals were in my home which were making me sick.

I didn't pursue finding out more about this until after my fast. Relieved of the symptoms associated with food exposure, my chemical reactions became more acute

Slowly I began to associate particular symptoms with specific exposures. When I applied perfume, immediately I would get a headache; when I stopped wearing perfume, my headaches stopped. I felt faint in the shower, so I asked my father to rig up a filter that would remove chlorine; when he installed it, I no longer felt faint when I showered. I felt tired when I cleaned the house with toxic cleaning products; when I switched to vinegar and baking soda, I had plenty of energy for cleaning.

I also started doing research on toxic chemicals in everyday consumer products. Seeing the correlations between my symptoms and exposures inspired me to track down the chemical exposures that weren't so obvious. I started by going to the library and poison control centers, then medical libraries. I would read trade books to discover the chemicals in products, then toxicology books to find out their health effects. When I read that one of the symptoms associated with formaldehyde exposure was insomnia, and that a formaldehyde resin is used in all polyester-cotton bedlinens, my sleepless nights were no longer a mystery.

Some of the chemical exposures were easy to eliminate and others were more difficult. To eliminate exposure to perfume, for example, you can just stop wearing perfume, but you also need to eliminate all scented products, which include such basics as shampoo and soap. Finding sheets for my bed that didn't have formaldehyde-based permanent-press finishes was no easy task in 1980 either. I couldn't find a natural fiber bed or even

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

a futon, and ended up sleeping on cotton thermal blankets on the metal springs of a roll-away cot. I ripped up the new carpet from my bedroom floor and was left with paint-spattered cement because I didn't know what kind of flooring would be safe.

Along about this time, the first book about living with chemical sensitivity came out, called *Coping With Your Allergies*, by Natalie Golos. This book helped many of us in those early days, for we had no information at all. Our doctors knew nothing about environmental control and gave us no guidance. But for me, it wasn't enough. I wasn't content to live the sparse life described in the book. I couldn't see spending the rest of my life eating one food at a time on a rotation while wearing jeans and a tee shirt. There had to be a way to avoid toxic chemicals and have a good life.

That's when I began to search for all the positive possibilities. I learned enough about the toxic chemicals in products and their health effects to

know what to avoid, and then I set out to find as many products as I could that were free from these chemicals. There weren't many in those days, but I found enough to begin to piece together a nontoxic life.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

The Importance of a ‘Clean’ Environment

With my limited diet and chemical-free bedroom, my health began to improve.

My doctor noticed that I was the only one of his patients that was recovering, and hired me to counsel his patients on making environmental changes. He would send me out to patients' homes to find the toxic chemicals they were being exposed to, and then have me help them remove the offending products and replace them with nontoxic ones. And so I began my consulting practice. This was a very innovative approach then and now. I believe any doctor who treats patients with MCS needs to have this service available in their office.

In addition, I also helped patients with food allergy testing and did provocative-neutralization testing.

In the summer of 1980, a patient who was extremely sensitive contacted my doctor. She was so sensitive, she could not come to the office. So I had to go to her to test her.

She was staying in a small village just north of San Francisco called Bolinas. She had rented a little house on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The air was about as clean as it gets, anywhere on the planet. I ended up staying with her and her caretaker for a month. I had absolutely no stress. All my meals were fixed for me and all the food was 100 percent organically grown. I drank only spring water bottled in glass. I had no responsibilities except to test this woman, which I could do for only about an hour a day because she was so sensitive. We spent all of our time outdoors. We even slept outside. Every day we would go for a walk along the beach into town to buy organic food at the local co-op. That's it. The rest of the time I could do whatever I wanted.

Spending this concentrated time in a stress-free, as-clean-as-humanly possible environment really made the difference for me. At home, I had removed the chemicals from my bedroom, but the rest of the condo was still toxic and I was living in the middle of a city. In Bolinas, everything

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

was as pure and chemical-free as could be. My body quickly healed in this environment.

When I went home after a month, initially I was more sensitive to the chemical exposures, but soon my body adjusted. Spending this time in a completely clean environment really showed me the importance of environment on healing. It was what convinced me I really had to go all the way and have a completely nontoxic home.

I continued to live in Oakland for about another year. A friend of mine who had MCS wanted to move to a location with cleaner air, so we became housemates and went looking for a place to live.

We found an apartment in San Francisco at the very end of California Street, which dead ends into a park and beyond that there is nothing but the Golden Gate Bridge and the Pacific Ocean. The apartment was on the third floor. It was all-electric, but had carpets. Since the carpets were not in very good condition, we had no problem convincing the landlord to remove them.

Fortunately, there were beautiful hardwood floors below. I lived there for two years, then moved to another apartment six blocks away, and then to an apartment in the Marina district, also on the pathway of the winds through the Golden Gate.

Finally, in 1985, I bought my first home. My father decided to give my brother and I each a down payment on a house, so I had the freedom to create my ultimate nontoxic home. I chose a small town on the coast, about 30 miles north of San Francisco. I bought a little cottage in a forest and remodeled it with the few nontoxic building materials that were available at that time.

Since then, I lived back in San Francisco for a while, then moved to Marin County. For twelve years I again lived out in a forest in a rural community. Then in 2002, I moved to Florida, where I live in a suburb near the Gulf of Mexico.

Attitude Adjustment

The next step for me was to become aware that my thoughts affected my body. When I read about this, immediately I understood that I was prolonging my sensitivities by continuing to believe they existed.

I don't want to give the impression here that I am saying "It's all in your head." At that time in particular, back in the late 1970's, that a patient's ills could be caused by exposure to chemicals in our homes was something many doctors couldn't believe. "It's all in your head" was a phrase many patients with MCS heard before they got the right diagnosis.

In a way, I can understand. At that time the idea that a toxic chemical could be toxic because of long-term effects was still not widely known. After all, it had only been discovered in the 1960's that cigarettes caused cancer after slow day-by-day exposure over years. That's very different from what is commonly thought of as poison—an immediate effect that requires a call to a poison control center and a trip to the hospital.

The fact is, we are surrounded by toxic chemicals in consumer products that can cause harm to our bodies. But what we *think* about how our bodies respond to foods, chemicals, and other environmental exposures can affect how our bodies actually respond to them and how we recover from the illness.

That one reacts to a specific substance particularly gets ingrained in a patient's mind when the doctor finally says something like "your headache is due to perfume" or the patient discovers this for herself. The relief of knowing this and seeing the correlation further cements the "truth" of it. And so patients get a firmly established reality that says "I can't eat bread because I am allergic to it. I can't wear perfume because I am allergic to it. I can't...I can't...I can't..." and their world becomes smaller and smaller.

I began to examine my beliefs about my body's reactions to foods and chemicals. I remember observing "I'm saying I'm allergic to wheat and can't eat bread. But is this true?"

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

Wheat allergy can be reversed in as little as twelve days. Yes, I had a wheat allergy in the past, but do I now? Or do I just think I do? Or am I afraid I do? Wheat in and of itself is not harmful, so why is my body reacting negatively? I want to eat bread for nourishment. I choose to have my body tolerate it and be nourished by it."

Working through each of the foods like this and retesting them, I found that I could eat more foods. The body is constantly healing. What was true yesterday or last week isn't necessarily true today.

Yes, we need to identify what causes us harm and avoid those things, but we don't need to hold on to continuing to believe that things which are inherently benign are harmful to our bodies.

Many years later, a client told me that a Zen monk had given her some advice about chemical exposures. He said if she was in a situation where she couldn't avoid a chemical, that she could simply say, "Anything I am exposed to can

pass through my body without harm" and it would. She found this to be true for her. I agree. I believe we all have the ability to change our bodies by changing our minds.

Later, after I learned how my immune system worked, I was able to visualize how my immune system should work and give it instructions for repair. When I learned that my basic problem was not enough T-cells, I would visualize my immune system producing more T-cells. Over time, I felt better and believe this contributed to my recovery.

I am not saying we should surround ourselves with toxic chemicals and "think" them to be safe. Toxic chemicals are inherently antagonistic to life and have negative effects all throughout their lifecycle. We humans can intend for toxic chemicals to pass through our bodies without harm, but birds and bees and whales and trees can't.

For the sake of all life, we need to create a toxic-free world. It's not just about us. Everyone needs to live toxic-free.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

Maintenance

Today, in 2012, twenty-five years after I decided I had recovered from MCS, I am still able to live a normal life and do anything I want. And I still live in a nontoxic home.

It's a bit like being an alcoholic. You're recovered as long as you stay away from that which causes the illness.

I don't have any desire to go back to living a toxic lifestyle. I like my life the way it is. Why eat canned oranges swimming in sugar syrup when I can pick the sweetest organically grown tangerines right off my tree? Why wear sticky polyester when I can wear cool cotton? Nontoxic and natural products are not only better for my body, they give more pleasure.

Way back in the late 1970s, we used to explain MCS by saying the body is like a water barrel. You can fill it and fill it and fill it with toxic chemical exposures and you won't feel an effect until it overflows. Once it's full to overflowing, you are continuously ill. Avoiding toxic chemical

exposures allows your body to process some of the accumulated chemicals, and relieve illness.

Today this is called "body burden" and the body burden of Americans is monitored by the Centers for Disease Control as a cause of illness.

Now it's more than MCS. Now illnesses belonging to every body system have been associated with toxic chemical exposure.

Maintaining my health is having a life of balance. I can travel and eat out because at home I live and sleep in a completely nontoxic environment, eat organic food and drink spring water.

There are now so many nontoxic products available that there is no need for anyone to have toxic exposures in their home environments.

I recovered from having multiple chemical sensitivities and have stayed symptom-free for twenty-five years. So can you.

*The
Seven Essentials
of
Recovery*

Your Body is Designed for Health

I am not a medical doctor. This is not medical advice. This is simply a report of what I have observed works to recover from multiple chemical sensitivities.

I offer it to you as one who has recovered from this illness, for your information only, for you to do with as you please. You are responsible for any result that occurs from applying this information to your own body.

When recovering from multiple chemical sensitivities, the most important thing to keep in mind is this: **Your body is designed for health. Every cell and system in the body is continually making adjustments to keep the body in optimum condition.**

Toxic chemicals destroy specific cells in our bodies. Many of them attack the immune system, which leads to multiple chemical sensitivities. When we stop bombarding our bodies with chemicals, the body begins to heal itself.

We can also support the body in its healing and detoxification with nutritious food, clean water, regular exercise, and therapies that contribute to body balance and regeneration.

The body WILL heal itself. It knows how to do that. We just need to allow it to do what comes naturally.

The important thing is to focus on *creating health*, not treating disease.

#1 Live in a Nontoxic Home

To rid your home of ALL toxic chemicals is the most important step you can take. Without this, the other aspects of healing will have little effect. To heal, you **MUST** stop allowing toxic chemicals to destroy your body.

I cannot stress enough how important it is to have a nontoxic home environment. Do whatever you can do step-by-step, but keep going until you have identified ALL the toxic exposures and eliminated them. There is a lot of information on my website about how to do this.

I've observed many people, including myself, who did not fully heal until they removed those last few toxic products that they thought were so small it wouldn't make any difference. For me, it was the lipstick that was the exactly perfect shade that had taken years to find.

When you are full recovered, you can allow more exposures to chemicals that are slightly toxic, if you want to.

This needn't be deprivation. There are so many nontoxic and natural products available now that you may find, as I did, that your life can be even more pleasant and pleasing using nontoxic products. You will certainly be happier because you are feeling better.

Also, if you can live in a place where there is reasonably clean outdoor air, all the better. One of my first experiences creating a nontoxic home was with a friend of mine, in downtown Oakland, where it was, and still is, fairly polluted. We were operating on the brand new data that there was more pollution indoors than outdoors and it was the indoor air pollution that mattered. We remodeled his charming Arts & Crafts bungalow to be totally nontoxic and then he couldn't live there because of the outdoor air quality. I learned my lesson. He and I became housemates and moved to a spot in San Francisco with very clean air, and we both felt much better.

#2 Eat Nourishing Organically Grown Food

In order for your body to heal, it needs nourishment. You need to eat enough of a variety of real, whole, fresh foods for your body to get the proteins, fats, complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients it requires for health.

It is important to get these foods from real, whole, fresh foods and not from dietary supplements. Most supplements are made from nutrients that are isolated from their natural context, so you never get all the micronutrients that are supplied by whole foods. If you want to take supplements, choose whole food supplements. These at least are made from whole foods, but they are still processed.

I'm not against taking supplements. I used to be of the belief that we can get all the nutrients we need from food, but in today's world, unless you are eating organically grown good grown in amended soil, right off the tree or right out of the ground, there aren't enough nutrients in the food for a healthy body.

Also, there are situations--such as illness--when the body needs extra support.

There are many good, organically grown, whole-food and herbal supplements available. If you do want to take supplements, work with a knowledgeable advisor to find the exact supplements you need. Don't just take a lot of supplements without finding out what your body needs. And take the purest supplements you can find and afford. Many supplements contain additives you will probably react to.

Eat as much organically-grown food you can find and afford. Have it delivered to your home from an online source if necessary. Conventional supermarket food contains residues of toxic pesticides that can interfere with your healing. The more organically grown food you can eat, the faster you will heal.

Create meals you enjoy by starting with fresh raw vegetables. Then add some protein and then a smaller amount of whole food complex carbo-

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

hydrate, such as potatoes with the skin on or whole grains. Include a small amount of good fat. Eat a small amount of fruit for a sweet treat.

You'll need to prepare your own meals, so you'll need to learn how to cook, if you don't already know, or have someone prepare your meals for you. Going out to eat is probably not going to be an option for a while, unless you have a local natural foods store or restaurant that serves whole organically grown food. Make your meals appetizing. There's no reason not to have healthy food that tastes good. Use sea salt and pepper, herbs and spices. Be creative!

Many people have difficulty healing due to the fact that they are malnourished. The list of foods their bodies tolerate is very small. But our bodies need to have food to stay alive.

Reactions to foods are not the same as reactions to chemicals. Foods themselves do not cause harm to the body, though they may cause reactive symptoms. It's important to continue to

eat, so sometimes the trade-off is to eat foods that cause reactions.

Food tolerance is directly related to one's chemical exposure. I saw first-hand, in myself and others, that when we reduced our chemical exposure, we were able to eat more foods. I strongly recommend to anyone who has food intolerances that you reduce your chemical exposure and see what happens to your food tolerances. If you want to test this out on your own body, go on a vacation for three or four days where the air is very clean, such as in the mountains or at the beach. After several days, you should be able to eat at least some foods you thought you were allergic to.

If you find that you really don't have many foods you can tolerate, eat them in rotation to help your body regain tolerance. The theory is that food allergies develop because in our modern world, we eat the same foods over and over again at every meal every day. But our bodies are not designed for that. If we were living out in

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

the wild, which is the natural environment for which our bodies were designed, we would be eating a wide variety of foods very irregularly, as we are able to hunt or gather them. Various fruits and vegetation would be available only seasonally, and then we wouldn't eat it again until next year. We would have to hunt and kill an animal or rob a nest for eggs and these events wouldn't happen every day. Our modern eating patterns are completely different from what our bodies are designed for, so it's no wonder that our bodies develop problems with food.

It takes four days for all the residues of a food to leave your body entirely. If you wait until your body is completely free of the food before eating it again, slowly your body will regain tolerance.

The standard practice for food allergy rotation diet is to make a list of tolerated foods, and make a rotation plan so that the list is spread out over the four days, then you start the list again. A five-day rotation is even better.

There is a bit of an art to this. Choose foods that taste good together to eat together. Combine beef and mushrooms together, for example, rather than mushrooms and guavas.

Even though I love to eat, I've found that as my body gets healthier and healthier, what I want to eat most is just simple foods, simply prepared. Mostly vegetables. Believe it or not, I really look forward to eating my big raw salad every day for lunch. And this from a woman who used to live on dessert and bread.

One thing that has really worked for me is to identify the flavors I want and then make similar dishes using ingredients that are best for my body. I really love spaghetti and meatballs, for example, but now I make my own turkey meatballs with garlic and parsley, and serve them with tomato sauce over spinach instead of pasta, with a sprinkle of romano cheese. It tastes the same because it has the essential flavor elements. I'm totally satisfied and my body feels good.

#3 Drink Lots of Pure Water

After many years of research, it is clear to me that spring water, as close to straight from the spring as possible, is the most life-sustaining.

In the past, my best recommendation for water used to be to use a distiller, but I've changed my mind. Even though many health advisors still recommend distilled water, in some parts of the world it is considered a poison. In Japan, bottles of distilled water are labeled with skulls and crossbones. Fish will not live in distilled water. It is the purest in the sense that it, when combined with carbon, has the fewest pollutants. But it is also missing the minerals contained in natural spring water.

Though distillation does come closest to duplicating nature's own process for purification, in nature, the full cycle includes the pure water trickling down into the earth and being "recharged" with minerals before it bubbles up in a spring. Water containing these minerals is what Nature intended for us to drink.

Ideally, we would all go collect fresh water from a local spring. But since that isn't available to most people, purchase spring water in glass bottles, and if that it's available, purchase spring water in clear PET plastic bottles. Even spring water in plastic bottles is better than tap water.

Drink A LOT of water. Most people don't drink nearly enough. It is generally recommended that an adult drink eight eight-ounce glasses (2 quarts) of water each day, but most people don't drink even that. My doctor told me I should drink a gallon (4 quarts) of water every day. I can tell you, when I drink more water, my body feels better and my mind is more alert. Water contributes to every body function, so I'm not surprised I feel better.

It has been a challenge for me to drink even 2 quarts of water, but it can be done. Here's how to do it. Measure out whatever you decide your daily intake to be. Start with 2 quarts, because that is the minimum, and work up to four. Use two quart-size bottles. Decide to drink one bottle

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

between certain hours, say 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and the other between 3:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Then you can drink three quarts, one every four hours, and then four quarts, one every three hours. By timing it this way, you can make sure you are getting your water in, and you don't have to measure. I buy my spring water in gallon bottles, so I just need to drink the whole bottle throughout the day. I can readily see how much I have left.

Don't rely on thirst as a reminder to drink. By the time you are thirsty, your body is already dehydrated. Drink throughout the day to keep your body hydrated and healthy.

Here are some tips for drinking water:

- Carry a quart-size water bottle with you.
- Drink at set times during the day.
- Set alarms on your watch or computer to remind you to drink until you develop the habit.
- If you have regular breaks at work, start each break with a drink of water.
- Every time you think of drinking something

else, drink water instead. Your body needs water—other beverages don't have the same beneficial effect.

#4 Move Your Body Every Day

Many toxic chemicals are stored in the adipose fat tissue in our bodies. One way to release them is to burn the fat through exercise.

But take this slowly. You don't want to exercise a lot and get a big rush of chemicals into your bloodstream.

Do whatever you can do to move. If you are bed-ridden, wiggle your fingers and toes and lift your arms and legs. If you can get out of bed, walk around your room and then around the house.

Walking is excellent exercise, particularly if you can walk outdoors in an area where the air is clean, such as at the beach or in a park, rather than along a busy street. Search out good places to walk so you know where they are when it's time to walk.

Get some comfortable shoes, so you can walk as long as you want to.

Listen to music, bring a friend to talk to, or just look around while you are walking. Just the act of looking outward at your surroundings instead of focusing on your illness will make you feel better.

If all you can do is walk five minutes, or even one minute, start with that and gradually increase time and distance.

Movement is essential to your recovery. Eating fresh vegetables and fruits, drinking lots of water, and exercise will begin to release toxic chemicals from your body.

Exercise also stimulates your lymphatic system, which eliminates toxics from your body. Unlike your bloodstream, which is moved by the pumping heart, your lymph system requires body movement to get it going. Without movement, all the toxic chemicals just sit in your body. So get moving! Turn on some music and dance! Whatever you enjoy! Just move!

#5 Use Life Enhancing Therapies

You can recover from multiple chemical sensitivities on your own, without modern medicine. Indeed, the antidote for this illness is to remove your body from modern life, and let it heal naturally on it's own.

If you wish to give your body support in it's healing, use what are called "alternative" or "complementary" therapies, such as chiropractic, acupuncture, homeopathy, bodywork, or other therapies designed to restore balance and flow to the body. Each of these practices, and others, have helped my body in it's healing process.

I suggest that you explore the different therapies available to you and see what effects they have on your own body. Also, I have found a wide variation in the skill of different practitioners, so if one practitioner isn't effective, try another.

You'll need to find the right combination of therapy and therapist that works for you.

For many years it was my belief that if we simply stopped bombarding our bodies with the toxic chemicals that made them sick in the first place, the natural healing processes of our bodies would rebuild their health. And I recommended against doing any type of detox program, thinking the body would detox itself in it's own time.

But I've changed my mind. I've found in the past year that when I give my body some help, slowly and gently, it responds very well.

The natural systems of our bodies are designed for a world without toxic chemicals. In today's world, they need some help to process and remove the sheer volume of incoming toxic chemicals, and if toxic chemicals are stored in your body, it needs even more help. And we all have toxic chemicals stored in our bodies to one degree or another.

There are many detox products available today. I encourage you to find one that is right for you. Read more at **toxicfreenutrition.com**

#6 Benefit from the Power of Mind and Spirit

As I said in the introduction to this ebook, I actually consider my MCS to be a blessing. Illness is a sign that there is something going on in your life that is not life-sustaining. It is an opportunity to find not only health, but happiness.

For me, my recovery included questioning everything about my life. Prior to this illness, I didn't think much for myself, but just accepted everything that others put into my life, including products containing toxic chemicals.

In order to recover, I had to start making my own choices. I became more self-determined. The illness was the result of my not taking responsibility for my life, and it showed me that I needed to take responsibility if I wanted to survive.

There are many different methods of self-examination. Explore them and find one that suits you. I've used many different methods and

each helped me at the time. As you grow, be willing to find new methods that allow you to learn different aspects of yourself.

You can also use your mind to heal your body. The body operates on instructions from the mind. While toxic chemicals do exist and do have the potential to cause harm, how and when you are exposed to them, and even how your body reacts to them can be your choice.

Where you put your attention can also make a difference. If you are constantly focused on your body and how it feels and how to take care of it, you can get caught up in worry.

Part of healing for me was to get interested in something besides my illness. What got me up in the morning when I was sick was my interest in doing all the research on toxic chemicals in products and, even more importantly, the search for the nontoxic products I could use and enjoy.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

When I began to write, it was much more interesting to write a book than to be sick. Even now, I find that I feel most vibrant and alive when I am interested in some creative project. Find something you love and do it regardless of what is going on with your body.

Do whatever need to do to reduce stress in your life as much as possible. Handle problem situations, take time to relax. Have fun. Stress contributes to multiple chemical sensitivities as much as any other factor.

And use your spiritual resources, whatever they may be. If you don't already have a religion or spiritual practice, explore this area and discover the peace and power it holds for healing.

Our bodies are actually very resilient. They don't need a lot of care. They do need basic maintenance and to not be under the constant threat of our chemical environment.

Beyond that, one's personal interest in and excitement about life goes a long way towards

#7 Surround Yourself with Support

I have to say that I could not have recovered without the support of the people around me, particularly my father. I was fortunate that I had loved ones who believed my illness was real and did what they could to help me.

If you don't have this kind of support in your own family or circle of friends, find it wherever you can. We all need encouragement, validation, information and help.

Support groups can be lifesaving if you have multiple chemical sensitivities. If you don't have one in your local area, start one.

Just a bit of advice, however. Make sure your support group is about supporting its members in recovering from this illness, and not about coping with it. I left a support group because everyone in it just wanted to sit around and complain about how sick they were. But if you are all committed to recovering, you can help each other do so for the benefit of everyone in the group.

Today we are fortunate to have the internet, where we can connect with like-minded people on all subjects. There are many MCS support groups that offer all kinds of help.

Right now I belong to a business support group, that I meet with every Saturday morning. We have a great time together while we help each other solve our business problems. Everyone in our group has been doing better since we started meeting.

Also, find good health care practitioners who are supportive rather than authoritarian. My primary healthcare provider at the moment considers we are a team working cooperatively together to create the health of my body. I love that viewpoint!

So find some support! Let others align with you in your healing.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivities and Immune System Dysregulation

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

by Debra Lynn Dadd and Alan S. Levin, M.D.

After seeing my success with the patients I was counseling, Dr. Levin asked me to come and work in a new office he was opening in San Francisco. Dr. Levin was an immunologist. From him I learned how the immune system worked and how mine was malfunctioning.

I had continued to search for safe products I and my patients could use, and with Dr. Levin's support, in 1982 I self-published my first book on the subject A Consumer Guide for the Chemically Sensitive. It contained this Foreword, which explained exactly how the immune system worked and the malfunction that led to multiple chemical sensitivities. This was the first book to explain MCS medically and give practical solutions for recovery.

This book sold over 2,500 copies and had national media attention, which led to my getting a publishing contract for my first published book, Nontoxic & Natural.

Multiple chemical sensitivities is an illness involving intolerance of certain chemicals found in the everyday environment. It is often referred to as a new type of allergy, and is popularly known a variety of names: environmental illness, ecologic illness, immunotoxic syndrome, total allergy syndrome, cerebral allergy, or bioecologic illness. Doctors who treat this disorder practice Environmental Medicine, Clinical Ecology, Ecologic Medicine, or Bioecologic Medicine.

Many physicians argue that multiple chemical sensitivities are not an allergy at all, because reactions are not mediated by the same system that causes traditional allergic reactions to pollen, dust, animal dander, and molds. Technically they are correct; we now know that multiple chemical sensitivities are the result of a different malfunction of the immune system, recognized as a new and distinct disorder known as "immune system dysregulation."

The traditional concept of allergy associates only a few specific symptoms with a limited num-

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

ber of natural inhalants. In immune system dysregulation, the immune system similarly loses its ability to suppress unnecessary reactions, yet a much wider range of complex symptoms results, involving a variety of organ systems.

Furthermore, these responses occur to a greater number of substances, including certain toxic chemicals as well as foods and natural inhalants. The most extreme manifestation of immune system dysregulation is universal reactivity to everything in the external environment, and even to the body's own tissues and organs.

SYMPTOMS

A substance can provoke any one or more of a number of symptoms in an individual, including traditional "allergic" nasal stuffiness, wheezing, sneezing, asthma, chronic sore throat, postnasal drip, laryngitis, itching eyes, hives, and rashes. In addition, gastrointestinal disturbances such as gastric irritation, bloating, intermittent constipation or diarrhea, hemorrhoids, or anal bleeding may occur. Musculoskeletal aches, pains, or

twitching, and arthritis or rheumatism are some other common reactions, as well as problems in a host of other body systems, such as frequent or painful urination, menstrual cramps, body or breath odors, metallic aftertaste, sensitivity to light, visual disturbances, and ringing in the ears.

The most surprising and dramatic documented environmentally-induced symptoms by far are the cerebral and behavioral reactions. These include migraine headaches, fatigue, dizziness, learning disabilities, confusion, inability to concentrate, lack of motivation, memory loss, and dyslexia. Personality changes, mood swings, hyperactivity and depression are also common.

In addition, another common behavioral symptom is insatiable hunger, leading to incessant eating and often to obesity. Addictions to specific foods, such as wheat, corn, sugar, coffee, and chocolate can also develop, as well as addictions to alcoholic beverages, drugs, tobacco, and even some common chemical vapors, such as perfume, hairspray, or glue.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

The same immune system dysregulation which causes multiple chemical sensitivities is also believed by some scientists to be the predecessor for such diseases as hypertension, rheumatoid arthritis, coronary artery disease, and cancer. Immune system dysregulation may also be directly responsible for certain symptoms associated with other diseases such as infectious hepatitis, herpes, and infectious mononucleosis. In addition, immune system dysregulation reduces the immune system's ability to fight infection, leaving the body vulnerable to various illnesses caused by bacteria, viruses, and fungi.

DEVELOPMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

Immune system dysregulation can develop over a long period of time due to repeated infectious diseases, continuous stress, and/or cumulative exposure to toxic chemicals, even at the low levels found in our everyday environment. It can also be triggered by a single serious viral infection, major stress, or massive chemical exposure.

Immune system dysregulation often remains undiagnosed, however, because many physicians, faced with its incredible array of seemingly unrelated symptoms, and unfamiliar with the available diagnostic methods, misdiagnose it "stress", "psychosomatic disease," or the like. The medications commonly prescribed for these problems may suppress the symptoms to some extent, but often further aggravate the problem without dealing with the underlying disease process at all.

HOW THE IMMUNE SYSTEM WORKS

It is important to comprehend how the immune system works in order to understand how a simple malfunction can lead to such complex reactivity and symptomatology. The immune system is the body's basic defense against disease, providing protection by recognizing dangerous bacteria or viruses which enter the body and rendering them harmless. It works mainly through three kinds of white blood cells: **B cells** from the bone marrow, **T cells** from the thymus, and **macrophages** from the bone marrow and spleen.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

B cells produce **antibodies**, proteins which circulate in the bloodstream, locating and identifying foreign substances, which are called **antigens**. When an antigen enters the body, B cells spring into action, and produce specific antibodies which attach to the antigens to form **immune complexes**. B cells are capable of producing a broad range of specific antibodies which identify and bind not only to disease producing viruses and fungi, but to non-disease producing antigens as well. B cells are always ready to respond to foreign substances: left to function on their own, they would continuously and indiscriminately produce antibodies to all antigens, whether harmless or dangerous.

T cells control the B cells. When a harmless substance enters the body, the T cells signal the B cells to suppress antibody production, yet when a dangerous substance enters and must be eliminated, the T cells allow antibody production at a controlled rate and only until no more are needed. T cells can be programmed through vaccination or immunization to allow antibody production

to previously unfamiliar but harmful antigens such as smallpox or polio. Conversely, allergy shots or other immunostimulation techniques can program T cells to recognize harmless antigens and to suppress production of their antibodies.

The macrophages filter the immune complexes (formed by the combination of foreign antigens with antibodies from the B cells) from the blood and digest them into their component parts: proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids. These components can then be either utilized as nutrients or eliminated through the kidneys or gastrointestinal tract. The inherent capacity of the macrophage system for processing immune complexes varies among different individuals, and is determined by heredity.

When a harmful antigen, such as a flu virus, enters the body, the T cells allow the B cells to produce flu virus antibodies and attach them to the flu virus antigens. After the resulting immune complexes have been filtered out and digested by the macrophages, the body has been effectively

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

protected. When a substance such as wheat enters, which the body does not need to be protected from, the T cells prevent the B cells from producing wheat antibodies.

This same immune system mechanism which protects the body from disease can, when malfunctioning, cause a broad range of symptoms in reaction to a number of harmless or even beneficial substances entering the body. This malfunction commonly originates when the T cells are damaged by toxic chemicals, stress, and/or infectious disease.

When the normal complement of T cells is reduced in number, or when their ability to function is impaired, they can no longer adequately control B cell production of antibodies. Without this control, the B cells cannot distinguish harmless dust, pollen, or animal hair, or vital and nutritious foods, from toxic chemicals or life threatening bacteria or viruses. They react by producing antibodies to all foreign substances indiscriminately at an uncontrolled rate.

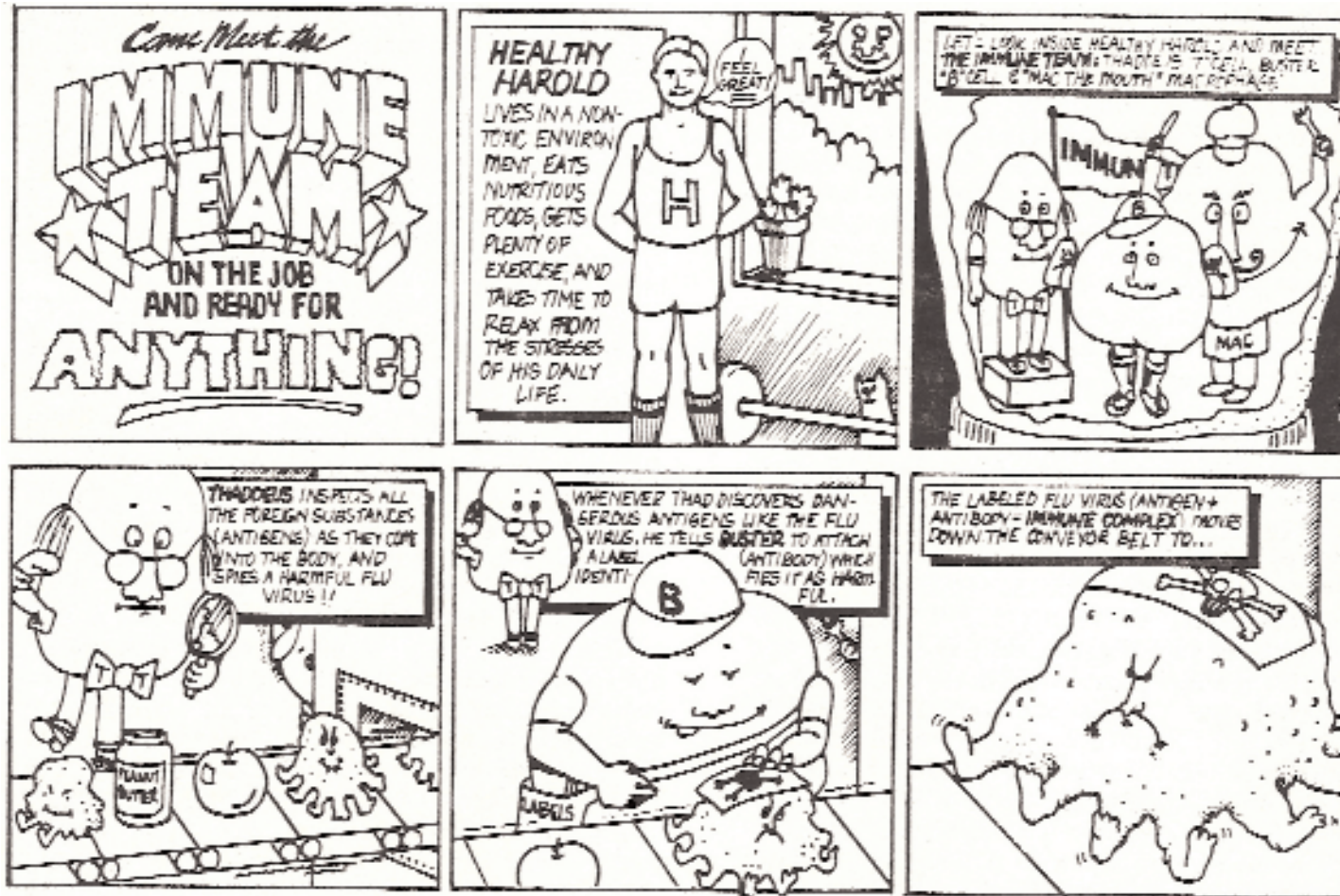
Sometimes even **autoantibodies**, which are antibodies directed against the body's own tissues, are produced.

Unlimited antibody production leads to the formation of larger quantities of immune complexes than the macrophages can process. When the macrophages become overloaded, the excess immune complexes are discharged into the bloodstream. These circulating immune complexes can then cause symptoms in any part of the body fed by an artery or capillary.

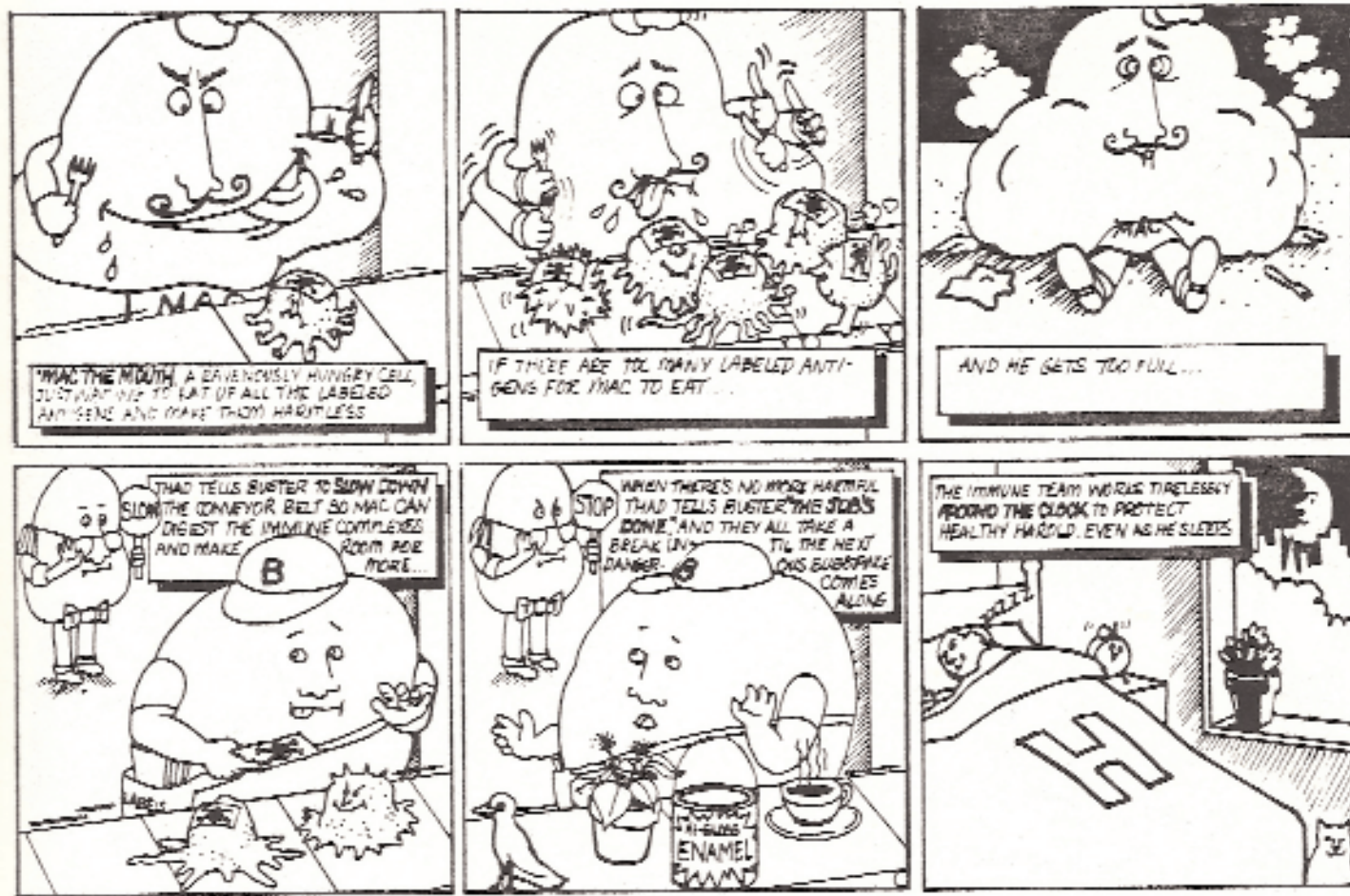
REVERSING THE CONDITION

This disease process can be effectively reversed by protecting the T cells from stressful factors, allowing them to regenerate naturally and resume their normal regulatory function. The most effective way to accomplish this is a comprehensive reduction of all possible stresses on the immune system, both physiological and psychological. Approaches to consider include the following:

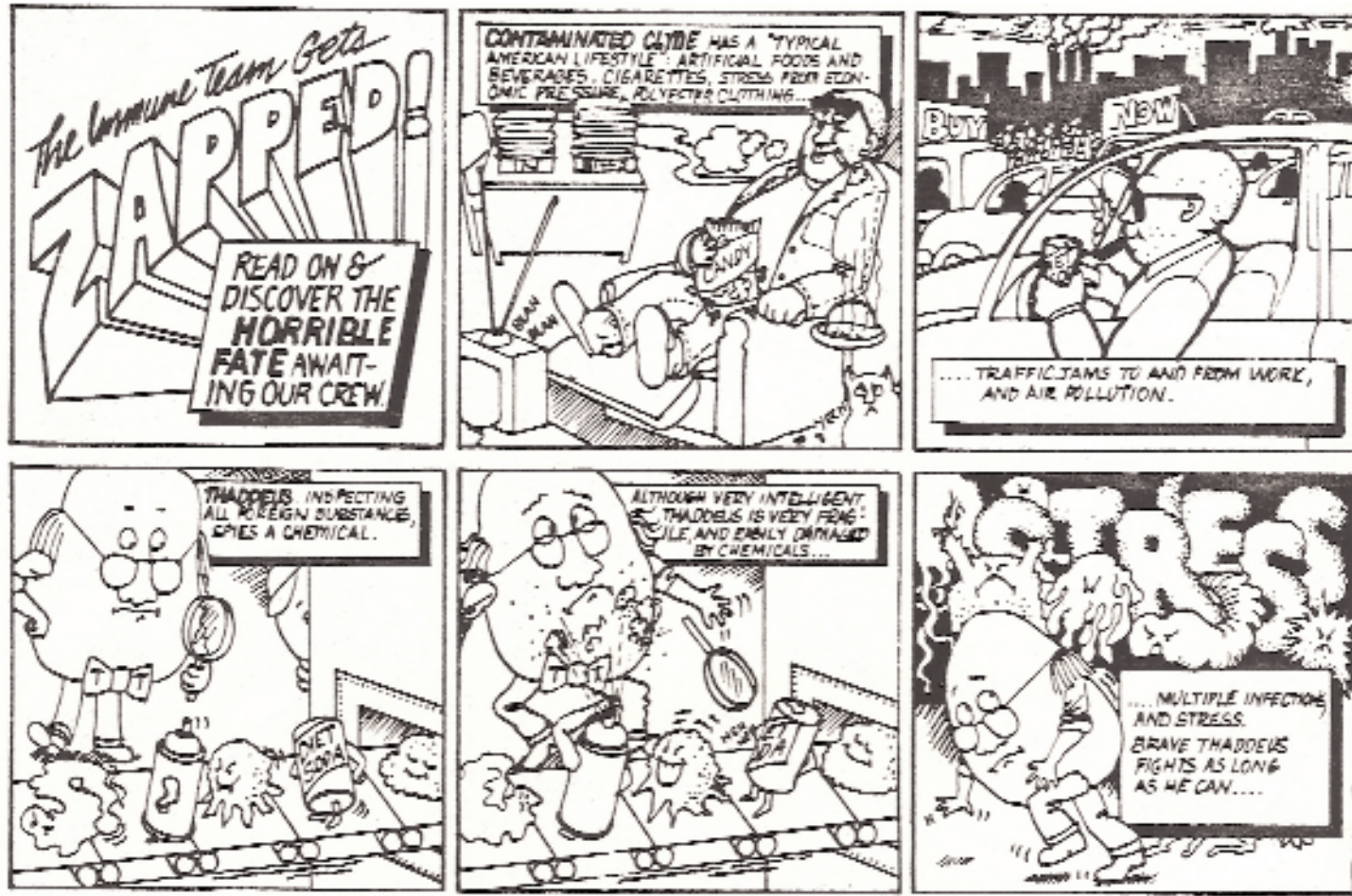
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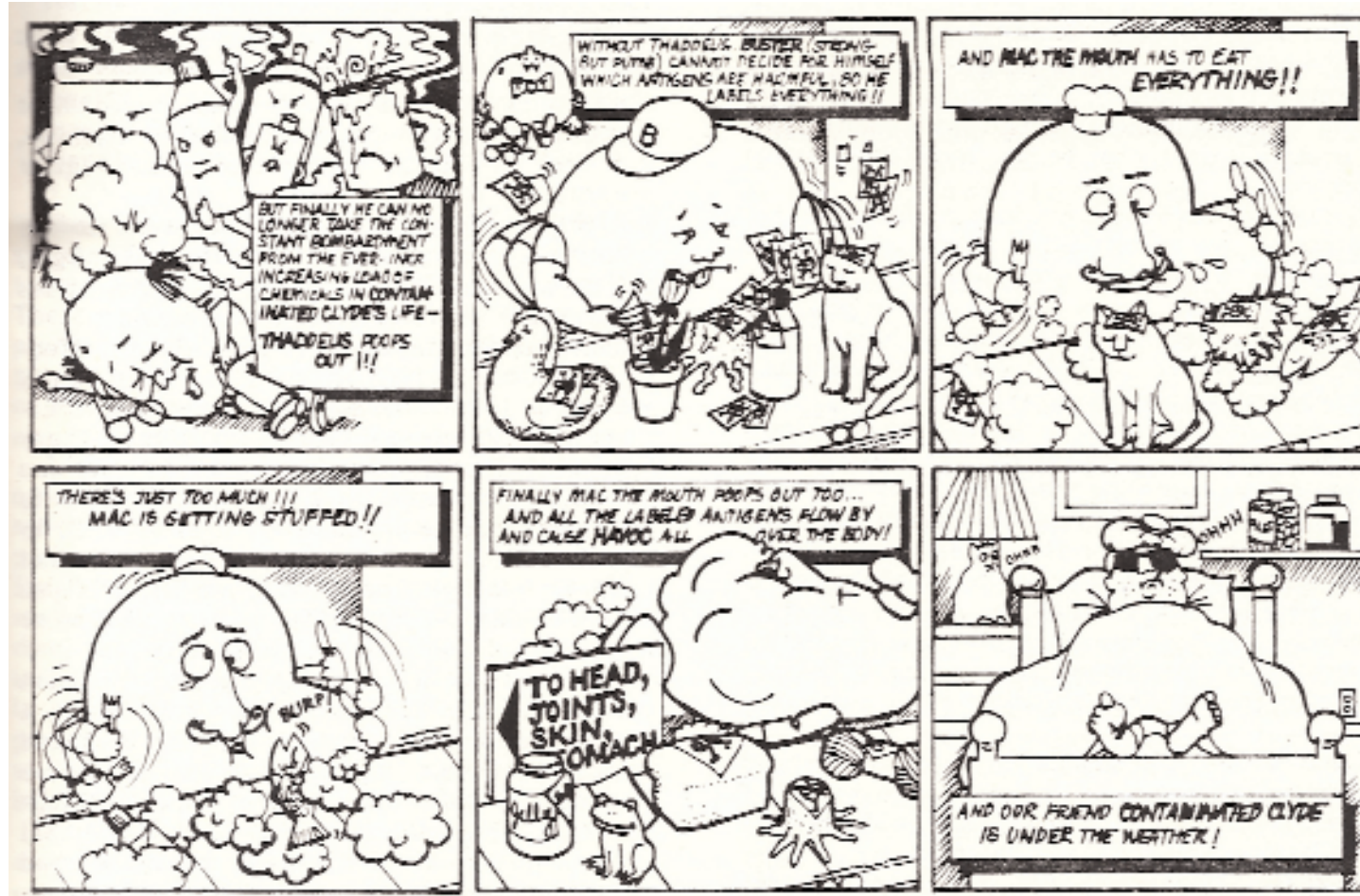
How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities



How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities



How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities



How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

- **Attitude** - Develop a positive, productive attitude towards life; cultivate a sense of responsibility and purpose, and seek socially effective activities and interaction.

- **Stress** - Develop proper stress management techniques, and make life changes necessary to reduce unwanted stress.

- **Chemicals** - Minimize exposure to toxic chemicals in air, foods, and water. Live, eat, and work in the cleanest environment possible. Avoid cigarette smoke particularly.

- **Exercise** - Include a program of regular exercise.

- **Light** - Ensure adequate exposure to the benefits of natural light. Conventional fluorescent lights are a stress for many with multiple chemical sensitivities.

- **Harmful disease agents** - Exposure to infectious bacteria, viruses and fungi (particularly *Candida albicans*) should be avoided. Effective treatment should be instituted for any existing disorders from these agents. If you must be treated with antibiotics, be sure to ask your doctor for an antifungal as well, to maintain proper

balance among intestinal flora. Have gamma globulin injections if you have been exposed to mononucleosis or hepatitis. Avoid herpes infections.

- **Food and nutrition** - Obtain proper nutrition and avoid chemical contaminants by eating a balanced diet of whole, naturally produced foods. Avoid those foods which cause reactions, and rotate foods to avoid development of new sensitivities. Use nutritional supplements if individual needs exceed nutrients available from tolerated foods. Remember that individuals with immune system problems often require more of particular nutrients than the norm.

- **Immunostimulation techniques** - These include specific antigen therapy (allergy shots) or nonspecific immunologic enhancement using Transfer factor, Interferon, or Thymosin.

THE HEALING PROCESS

The actual healing process from immune system dysregulation is long, slow, and punctuated by exasperating short-term setbacks. These set-

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

backs are inevitable, as the healing process invariably follows a "roller coaster" pattern. The frequency, duration, and severity of setbacks gradually diminishes until symptoms are mild and occur only occasionally.

After recovery has begun, an individual will often begin to notice adverse reactions to substances which previously caused no problems, such as diesel fumes, air pollution, or fabric finishes. This phenomenon, known as "masking", occurs when the elimination of dominant exposures allows underlying sensitivities to become temporarily more acute. This is to be expected; though it is sometimes perceived as an increase of symptoms or severity of the disease, it is, in fact, an indication of improvement.

Another aspect of the healing process is the experience of withdrawal from previously unrecognized addictions. As in any traditional addiction, the feeling of well being is maintained only through continual re-exposure to the addicting agent. Upon avoidance, this feeling of well being

gives way to various symptoms, some of which may be rather severe. This withdrawal may be experienced from a remarkably wide variety of substances, including coffee, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, many foods, and even some common chemicals. It is not uncommon, for instance, to find an individual who is "addicted to his work," the painter who "feels miserable" on weekends, or the printer who stays drunk all during his vacation. Generally, however, withdrawal symptoms last for only three to five days and then, if the individual can avoid succumbing to temptation, the symptoms are relieved. After having abstained for long periods, a formerly addicted individual will usually have immediate and severe symptoms upon re-exposure to the addicting agent, whether it be paint, cigarettes, or wheat.

Rebuilding the immune system and regaining tolerance to chemicals and other substances in the environment is a gradual process which may take one or two years. During this time, avoidance of disease causing agents and stress are crucial, but perhaps the most important requisite

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

for recovery is avoidance of the toxic chemicals found in the everyday environment.

Even the elimination of a single significant chemical exposure (i.e., gas heat, smoking, or perfume) may immediately reduce symptoms and allow the healing process to begin, but it is the continuous protection of the immune system from chemical exposures of all kinds which will allow tolerance and health to be regained. Remember, however, that once the immune system has been damaged, it will always remain vulnerable. Regardless of the level of tolerance achieved, chemically sensitive individuals should continue to minimize chemical exposures throughout their lives.

Once health is restored, occasional chemical exposures can be tolerated, given an overall non-toxic lifestyle. The proper balance must be maintained between these greater exposures and a generally low baseline level of exposure, so that the immune system is not overloaded to the point of malfunctioning. For instance, if you must live

in the city and work in a toxic, poorly ventilated office environment, you should spend as many breaks and lunch periods as possible away from smoke-filled coffee rooms and outside in clean air--in a park, on a roof garden, anywhere where you can breathe fresh outdoor air. You should also live in as clean a house and location as possible, and leave the city for unpolluted air whenever you can. If you suffer a major exposure, such as being trapped behind a diesel truck in a traffic jam for an extended period, you may require several hours at the beach breathing clean air.

It is very likely that many individuals are needlessly suffering from immune system dysregulation, without knowing about the disease or its symptoms. Because anyone is susceptible to this illness, it is beneficial for everyone to minimize exposure to toxic chemicals.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

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2. Inadvertant Modification of the Immune Response: The Effects of Foods, Drugs and Environmental Contaminants, Proc. F.D.A. - 4th Science Symposium, Aug. 28-30, 1978

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How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

About Debra Lynn Dadd



Debra Lynn Dadd brings more than thirty years of research and real-life experience to her work as a consumer advocate for products that are safer for health and the environment.

With her books *A Consumer Guide for the Chemically Sensitive* (self-published 1982), *Nontoxic & Natural* (Tarcher, 1984) and *The Nontoxic Home* (Tarcher 1986), Debra was the first to alert consumers to the toxic chemicals present in everyday household products and reveal both the short- and long-term health effects, as well as safe alternatives. She was the first to catalog nontoxic products, making them easily accessible to everyone. She continued to write about household toxics in *The Nontoxic Home & Office* (Tarcher/Putnam 1992), and *Home Safe Home* (Tarcher/Penguin 1997 and 2004).

Debra was also ahead of her time with her concern about the environmental effects of consumer products. She began writing on the subject in 1989 and was ready with her book *Nontoxic, Natural and Earthwise* when consumer interest exploded after Earth Day 1990. This was followed by her guide to choosing green products *Sustaining The Earth* (William Morrow 1994).

Today Debra is still the leader in her field, bringing new insight to consumers wanting to make healthier choices with her new book, *Toxic Free*, and her Toxic Free Zone website at **www.txoic-freezone.com**.

How I Recovered From Multiple Chemical Sensitivities

More

These resources on my website can help you in your journey with MCS.

Debra's List has more than 1000 links to websites that sell BPA-free and other nontoxic products of all kinds. From air filters to water bottles, you'll find every nontoxic product you need on this easy-to-search directory.

Green Living Q&A is my popular blog where you can ask your questions about nontoxic living and get answers from me and my knowledgeable readers. More than 2000 questions and counting.

Toxics & Health has articles on how toxic chemicals in consumer products can affect your health.

Debra's Bookstore sells recommended books on toxics and safe alternatives (which you can purchase with a click)

Toxic Free Nutrition has information about how to remove toxic chemicals from your body

Personal Consultations has information on how you can contact me directly. I am available to answer your questions regarding toxic exposures and toxic-free products by phone, or on-site at your home or workplace.

Please Share
Together we can create a toxic-free world