

ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITIES

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WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITIES?

Health problems associated with the environment are a growing concern in Canada and throughout the world. A person who becomes ill due to a substance (naturally occurring or synthetic) in the environment (air, water, or food) is said to have an environmental sensitivity or illness. Their bodies simply cannot deal with the toxins it comes into contact with, causing ill-

ness. The immune system cannot function properly, and an Auto-Immune Disease results. The immune system will become confused and unable to distinguish the body from foreign invaders. Therefore, the immune system begins to attack its own body.

People with an environmental sensitivity will experience a wide variety of

symptoms, including (but not limited to) headaches, nausea, abdominal pain, joint pain, muscle spasms, burning or sensitive eyes, ear pain, depression, and anxiety. Because the symptoms are so varied, they are not the best way to diagnose an environmental sensitivity. Instead, you can get allergy tested to find out what specific substances you are allergic to.

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Help Us Help Others!

For the last four years, the team at Back to Health has collected donations to two local women's shelters: Nelson House and Interval House. We not only raise money to help the women and their children, but we also take in donations of gifts, clothing, and food. We also purchase gifts for the women and children and wrap them.

If you would like to help out in any way, please let us know! You can either give a general donation of money, food, women's clothing or children's clothing, or you can pick a specific person (for example, an 8-year-old boy) and buy gifts for him/her.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity during this festive time of year!

Did you know...

Strongly scented products can trigger migraines, which approximately 17% of Canadians suffer from.

Please be kind to those with environmental sensitivities by wearing non-scented products when coming in for your treatments. Alternatives are available in most drug stores.

Some Common Sensitivities & Allergies

- ⇒ Pollens
- ⇒ Moulds
- ⇒ Dust Mites
- ⇒ Animal dander and saliva
- ⇒ Chemicals used in a wide variety of products including perfumes, household cleaning products, and clothing manufacture.
- ⇒ Venom from insect bites or stings
- ⇒ Foods such as corn, wheat, eggs, yeast, dairy, soy, seafood, chocolate, and nuts

Food Sensitivities & Allergies

While food allergies are not as common as many people think, food sensitivities are. The difference? A food allergy refers to the situation where an immediate reaction occurs upon ingesting the food. For example, you might experience breathing problems, sneezing, or hives. A sensitivity tends to produce symptoms several hours after ingesting the food at fault. They may be the same symptoms as with a true allergy, or they may be different, such as stomach upset or nausea. While allergies are the more life threatening problem, both can greatly effect a person's daily life.

There are two main types of food sensitivities or allergies: Cyclic and Fixed.

Cyclic sensitivities are caused by repeated exposure to the substance and will make the allergy worse. If you avoid the food for 2-3 months, you may find you can eat

it again in small amounts. With some people, years can go by between reactions, while in others, it make take years before they can eat the food without having a reaction.

Fixed sensitivities are when a reaction to food is permanent. In other words, no matter how often you eat the food, it will always cause a reaction. This is why it is important to have allergies properly identified by your health care practitioner.

It is interesting to note that many people develop addictions to foods the are allergic or sensitive to. Like with any addiction, they will develop a tolerance for a certain level of the food, and will experience withdrawal symptoms if the food is not eaten on a regular basis.

So I Think I Have a Sensitivity.. Now What?

Your first step is to figure out what you might be allergic to. The Holistic Health Care Shop can do allergy and sensitivity testing for all types of problems. If you are interested, contact them at (613) 521-1169 or email holistichealthshop@bellnet.ca. You can also check out their website at <http://www.holisticshop.ca/>

Treatment generally involves some lifestyle changes and changes to eating and work-related habits. You will need to avoid the substances you are sensitive to. Depending on what they are, you can...

- ⇒ Clean your bedroom, including all clothing, books, comforters, cushions, etc.
- ⇒ Get rid of chemical cleaners, personal care products, and synthetic clothing.
- ⇒ Avoid foods you are sensitive or allergic to, clean your food thoroughly, and eat organic produce.
- ⇒ Exercise regularly to promote overall wellness.

Your health care practitioner may also advise you to go on a detoxification plan for a short period of time in order to purge any accumulated chemicals and toxins from your body. While this

is generally a safe procedure, do make sure you discuss it with your health care practitioner before proceeding.

If food sensitivities are a problem, you will probably need to go on an elimination diet. This will remove the problem food from your diet, and then slowly re-introduce it to see if there is a reaction. Again, discuss this with your health care practitioner before proceeding.