Commission for Accessibility
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 12, 2025

Meeting Via Zoom

In Attendance: Christine Santori, Michael Londrigan Debra Franceschini, Divya Dorairrajan, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota.

5:05 PM CALL TO ORDER

N.B. There were two motions made during this session.

MOTION ONE: To approve CfA minutes from April 7, 2024 meeting.

Motion by Michael, Second by Christine
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mechanical Chemical Sensitivity – Public-Health Aspects

Abstract

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is a phenomenon which the ENT-doctor should be familiar with. It has its roots in the description of a syndrome in 1987. A worker spilled chemicals at his workplace and from then on he reacted highly sensitive to chemicals. Today, there are

many people who explain their complaints with self-suspected MCS. Various pathopysiological models have been proposed, including toxicological, immunological or behaviorial models. But no-one could be proved so far. Since controlled provocation tests have also provided unclear results, an increasing number of doctors assumes today, that MCS reflects a psychic condition. In 1996, an expert team of the WHO has suggested the renaming of MCS to "idiopathic environmental illness" (IEI). However, other doctors still assume a chemical cause. Since there are neither straightforward diagnostic methods to proof MCS, nor reliable therapeutic concepts, treatment of MCS-patients is usually difficult. The MCS-debate (somatic vs psychic causes) seems to reflect the dilemma of the medical profession today, that somatic disorders of known origin can be well treated, whereas the increasing number of psychosomatic/ somatoform disorders is often resistant to medical help. The ENT-doctor should pay attention to changes of the nasal mucous membrane, nasal resistance and the sense of smell. Moreover he should know about the peculiarities of MCS-patients. The manuscript describes the present knowledge and state of discussion with special regard to the situation in Germany.

U.S. Agencies: ADA, HUD, OSHA

ADA:

Yes, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) recognizes Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) as a disability, but it's not an automatic recognition. FindLawstates that MCS can qualify as a disability if it substantially limits one or more major life activities, such as breathing, working, or performing daily tasks. The ADA doesn't list specific conditions, but focuses on the impact of a condition on a person's ability to function.
Here's a more detailed breakdown:

- ADA Definition of Disability:

The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

- **MCS and Major Life Activities:**

  MCS can impact major life activities like breathing, working, or performing daily tasks. For instance, some individuals with MCS may have difficulty working in environments with certain chemicals or fragrances, Labor Law Center or may experience significant health problems when exposed to certain chemicals.

- **Individualized Assessment:**

  Whether MCS qualifies as a disability under the ADA depends on the individual's specific case and the extent to which it limits their ability to engage in major life activities.

- **Reasonable Accommodations:**

  If MCS is recognized as a disability, individuals with MCS are entitled to reasonable accommodations in workplaces and public accommodations. These accommodations may vary depending on the individual's needs and the specific situation.

- **Examples of Accommodations:**

  Examples of accommodations for individuals with MCS might include working in a separate office with better ventilation, being assigned to a role that does not require exposure to certain chemicals, or being allowed to wear a mask.

- **Legal Protections:**

  The ADA protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination in employment, public accommodations, transportation, telecommunications, and other areas.

OSHA:

Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (MCS) is a highly controversial issue. In theory, MCS is an adverse physical reaction to low levels of many common chemicals. Chemical intolerance is

generally accepted as a reaction to chemicals but debate continues as to whether MCS is classifiable as an illness. There are a number of synonyms for MCS, including 20th century disease, environmental illness, total allergy syndrome, idiopathic environmental illness, and chemical AIDS.

Proposed theories to explain the cause of MCS include allergy, dysfunction of the immune system, neurobiological sensitization, and various psychological theories. There is insufficient scientific evidence to confirm a relationship between any of these possible causes and symptoms. Due to the lack of definite information an evaluation must be performed by a physician knowledgeable of the symptoms of this condition.

HUD/Fair Housing Act:

HUD presently recognizes Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) as a disability entitling those with chemical sensitivities to reasonable accommodation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. People with MCS are also recognized as disabled under Title VIII of the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.

Is MCS a disability?
Yes, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) can qualify as a disability. However, it must substantially affect your life and job. Workplace accommodations for employees with MCS are on a case-by-case basis. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) bans employers from discriminating against people with disabilities.

Does CT Recognize MCS?

Yes, Connecticut recognizes Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS). In 1998, Connecticut Governor Rowland officially designated May 11-17 as MCS Awareness Week. Governor Rowland's proclamation acknowledged that MCS can impact access to work, school, and public facilities, and that reasonable accommodations can help individuals with MCS.
In 2000, another proclamation designated a week for MCS awareness and highlighted the importance of providing information and recognition of MCS to enable access to various settings. The proclamation also emphasized the need for reasonable accommodations to facilitate access to work, schooling, public facilities, and other settings.

MCS: "Seeds of Health"

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

The Following studies, Parts 1 and 2, are the excerpts from the work of the Environmental Health Association of Quebec and have been prepared by the Commission for Accessibility, Town of Ridgefield. The information contained herein is for educational purposes only. Individuals should consider the applicability to their circumstances.

Don Ciota, Chairman

Commission for Accessibility

Town of Ridgefield, CT

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity.

SEEDS of HEALTH Part 1/2

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 (per- fume, 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 be- tween the jawbone and the collarbone.

Environment

-
- 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 pre- pare 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, au- dio 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.

With the financial support of the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports (Québec).

CHECKLIST

Here is a checklist with strategies to help better manage your health.

PLAN YOUR DAY

- Thoroughly plan and schedule your basic needs, e.g. eating, drinking water, relaxing, exercising, and vitamin supplementation (if applicable).

- Write a short to-do list and, if possible, specify the time you plan on doing each item.
- Schedule tasks with risks of exposure to triggers right before returning home, such as shopping or going to the bank. You can then quickly remove your clothes and put them in for a wash, have a shower, wash your hair and put on clean clothes to lessen your exposure to those substances.
- At around noon, reassess your priorities by taking into account the energy you have left.

Take care of yourself

- Learn to accept that your day may not go as you had intended. Be patient with yourself and do not hold yourself responsible for what is happening to you. Take each day as it comes.
- Focus on your basic needs: eat well, rest, pay attention to your breathing and remain calm.

Before going out

- Dress comfortably (clothes, walking shoes) and go to the toilet before going out (most public toilets are full of fragrances).
- Bring along water, food and anything else that helps you to reduce symp- toms.
- Have within easy reach the phone numbers of people you can count on in case of an emergency.

Delivery or repair personnel

- Briefly explain your condition and insist they come at a time that is conve- nient for you.
- Request that delivery or repair personnel refrain from smoking or wearing fragrances (perfumes, scented deodorants, gels, creams, clothes washed in scented detergent or fabric softener).

- Ask a friend or relative to be present.
- If need be, open the windows.
- Request that products to be installed are off-gassed either at the store, in your garage or outside before installation.

What should you do if you experience a reaction after an exposure?

- Immediately leave the location that is affecting you.
- Ask friends or relatives to remind you to do so.
- Remain calm.

- Go home, quickly remove your clothes and put them in the washer, have a shower, wash your hair and put on clean clothes.
- If you are being seen by a specialist in environmental medicine, follow their instructions as soon as possible to relieve symptoms.

Always have this checklist on you and within sight, e.g. on your fridge.

- When visiting or having company
- Don't be shy, politely ask to be accommodated.
- Ask friends and relatives to not use scented or toxic products.
- Give them a list of cleaning and personal care products you can tolerate.
- Make sure they don't smell of smoke or fragrances either before they visit you or before you visit them.
- Open windows to ventilate the room (unless the air outside is polluted).
- Make sure the area you are visiting is free of mould
- If the ambient indoor air is not good, go outside. If the temperature and weather do not allow you to do so, go home.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a warning about early exposure to chemicals during childhood and one of the main sources is household cleaning products.

1. Antibacterial cleaners

It may be safer to take your chances with the germs. These cleaners contain triclosan, which can form dioxin, which is linked to weakened immune systems, decreased fertility, hormone disruption and birth effects. There is also a danger of triclosan mixing with the chlorine in tap water to form the deadly chlorinated dioxins.
Alternative: Regular soap, which kills 99.4% of germs. Antibacterial soap kills 99.6%.

2. Air fresheners

Air fresheners actually stop you from smelling by coating nasal passages with a film of oil or by releasing nerve-deadening agents. One main ingredient, formaldehyde, is a carcinogen, causing allergic reactions, dermatitis, headaches, mucous membrane irritations, joint and chest pain, depression, fatigue, dizziness and immune dysfunction. Another main component, phenol, causes skin eruptions, cold sweats, convulsions, circulatory collapse and, in extreme cases, coma.
Alternative: Open the window or use an exhaust fan.

3. Dishwasher detergents

Dishwasher detergents are the number one cause of accidental child poisoning. They contain a dry form of highly concentrated chlorine that is poisonous and has been know to produce skin irritations or burns, and cause eye injuries as well as damage to other mucous membranes. Residue built up on dishes can transfer into your hot meal.
Alternative: Buy phosphate-, chlorine-, colour- and perfume-free detergent.

4. Oven cleaners

Among the most dangerous chemicals in households, these cleaners contain sodium hydroxide (a derivative of lye) so corrosive it can eat through the top layer of skin and cause severe tissue damage. It is also caustic for eyes and lungs. Also contains benzene, toluene, xylene, methanol and ethyl benzene, which are all known carcinogens, damaging to the nervous system and unborn children. Residue can be released into the air as toxic fumes when the oven is heated.
Alternatives: Make a paste with salt, baking soda and water.

5. Carpet and upholstery shampoo

The main ingredient is perchloroethylene (the same one used in dry cleaning) is a known carcinogen, damaging to the liver, kidneys and the nervous system. Ammonium hydroxide, another ingredient, is corrosive, extremely irritable to eyes, skin and respiratory passages. Fumes are carcinogenic and known to case dizziness, sleepiness, nausea, loss of appetite and disorientation.
Alternative: Use a mix of baking soda and water. Salt will take out he wine or fruit stains. Club soda will remove lighter stains. Baking soda and cornstarch will deodorize.

6. Toilet, tub and tile bowl cleaners

Highly toxic, bathroom cleaners are a source of many poisonings, particularly since they are used in small, often windowless spaces. Most contain hydrochloric acid (corrosive to skin and eyes, and damages kidneys and liver) or hypochlorite bleach (corrosive to eyes, skin and respiratory tract, and known to cause vomiting and pulmonary oedema if inhaled). These cleaners also contain benzene, toluene, xylene, methanol and ethylbenzene, which are all known carcinogens that damage the nervous system and cause birth defects.
Alternative: Remove toilet bowl stains with pure vinegar. Dilute with water to remove soap scum. Washing soda is also effective on tiles.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity

Healthy and Ecological Solutions for Everyday Living part 2/2

Indoor and outdoor pollution is a grave environmental concern. Our choice of products affects the air, water, soil, flora and fauna. The impact of living with a cocktail of chemicals found in household air and dust is now scientifically proven to be harmful to your health. Those at greater risk from chemical exposures include: the foetus, babies, children, women, the elderly, workers in a high-risk occupation, the poor, and people with chronic existing illnesses including allergies, asthma, and Multiple Chemical Sensitivity. Chemical exposures and their resulting symptoms can elude doctors because of exposure to many chemicals − people can even have different reactions to the same chemical(s).

We can all benefit from using products with zero to fewer toxic chemicals. We have complete individual control over what we purchase for our homes and families to eat, clean with, walk and sit on, or apply onto hair or skin. It makes good sense to opt for the safest products for indoor environments − especially our homes! People with environmental or chemical sensitivities, allergies, asthma, dermatitis and migraines must find non- or least toxic products in order to maintain good health.

Is indoor air quality a concern for you?

We spend 90% of our time indoors. The USA Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that indoor air can be 10 times or more polluted than outdoor air. Long-term exposures to chemicals may cause a variety of health risks. Some people are more sensitive to commonly encountered chemicals and continued exposure can lead to disability. These include people who suffer from ***chemical sensitivities***.

Define “chemical sensitivity”:

Over one million Canadians have been diagnosed with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), a recognized disability under the Canadian Human Rights Act. The number of diagnosed cases has been increasing (Statistics Canada, 2015-2016, 2020), with up to 72% – 75% being women and close to 50% being seniors (Statistics Canada, 2016, 2020). Despite these facts, it is likely that many people have never heard about this medical condition.

MCS is a chronic condition, which is initiated or started following exposures to substances commonly used in our living spaces. These exposures can be from chemicals contained in products that are used in daily life, such as fragrances, personal care and cleaning products, renovation and construction materials, pesticides, solvents, and even biological contaminants such as mould.

Exposures that can initiate/start MCS can be one or more large exposures, or long term or chronic low-level exposures at home or at the workplace. This results in sensitization of the individual, causing exposure to the substance, to result in symptoms. Removal of these exposures from the environment of the individual will result in the person being symptom-free. However, if this is not done, constant exposures can provoke an increased number of symptoms in many body systems and can also cause the individual to have stronger reactions/symptoms to lower doses of exposure and an increased number of unrelated chemicals.

People experiencing MCS have a higher percentage of other chronic conditions when compared to the general population.

Prevention of developing MCS begins with the use of healthy safe alternatives for daily living, for all applications. In order to be successful, it is important to know how to navigate through the maze of healthy product selection.

Natural ≠ Safe

Don't be fooled by pretty logos or slogans. There are no legal definitions for words such as "natural", "fresh", "green", or "botanical". Read labels carefully to identify all ingredients in a product. Organic products must be certified and make sure the ingredients mention organic.

Read labels

Always read labels to find key ingredients in a product and evaluate their hazards. The first ingredient makes up the greatest amount in the product and the last ingredient, the least. Not all ingredients are listed. Components that are harmful to health may not be listed at all (e.g. manufacturing by-products of toxins present in personal care products). There are easy-to-find alternative products, but you need to read the labels and stay informed.

Avoid parabens, which are derived from petroleum. They are used in personal care products and have endocrine-disrupting properties. A chemical name in the paraben family is usually preceded by the prefixes methyl-, ethyl-, butyl- or propyl-. Look for these in the list of ingredients.

Endocrine disruptors

Endocrine disruptors are chemicals that either mimic or block hormones and disrupt the body's normal functions when absorbed into the body. They have been linked to developmental, reproductive, neurological and immune problems in both humans and wildlife. Altering normal hormone levels, halting or stimulating the production of hormones, or changing the way hormones travel through the body affects the functions that these hormones control. Known human endocrine disruptors are: dioxin, PCBs', DDT and other pesticides, and plasticizers such as bisphenol A (BPA) and its supposed "safer" alternatives, bisphenol S (BPS), bisphenol B (BPB), bisphenol F (BPF), currently used as "BPA-free" products (sources: S. Eladak, T. Grisin, D. Moison, M.-J. Guerquin, T. N'Tumba-Byn, S. Pozzi-Gaudin, A. Benachi, G. Livera, V. Rouiller-Fabre, R. Habert. (2015). "A new chapter in the bisphenol A story: bisphenol S and bisphenol F are not safe alternatives to this compound". *Fertility and Sterility,* 103 (1), pp. 11-21 ; Min Kyong Moon (2019). "Concern about the Safety of Bisphenol A Substitutes". *Diabetes and Metabolism Journal,* 43(1), pp. 46-48 ; Ullah, A., Pirzada, M., Afsar, T. *et al*. (2019). "Effect of bisphenol F, an analog of bisphenol A, on the reproductive functions of male rats". *Environment Health and Preventive Medicine,* 24(41)).

How chemicals enter the body

The 3 main routes of exposures are the skin, lungs and mouth. Chemicals are absorbed, circulated and added to the total level of toxic chemicals in our bodies.

Skin – The skin is the largest organ of the body and can absorb chemicals in personal care and household cleaning products. Chemicals may come into frequent contact with the skin and some can cause irritation from contact.

Lungs – When we breathe, delicate lung tissue can be exposed to chemicals that enter the blood stream and are distributed without passing through the detoxification process of the liver. These chemicals can cause damage throughout the body and can injure lung tissue. The use of "aerosols" is a concern because the expelled particles are very small.

Mouth – Toxic chemicals that enter the mouth are absorbed through the gastrointestinal tract. These include chemicals on food, such as pesticides or in products we eat and drink, and from substances applied on or near the mouth, such as lipstick. Frequent hand to mouth activity makes children most vulnerable to ingesting toxic residues on floors, furniture, objects, etc.

Tips to improve indoor air quality

Never allow smoking indoors;

Avoid scented products. "Fragrances" may contain phthalates, which are endocrine disruptors and may cause obesity, reproductive and developmental harm. Choose products that don't contain "perfume", "parfum" or "fragrance" on the list of ingredients;

Keep the house well-ventilated, leaving windows open in summer;

Install air purifiers/air exchangers equipped with a HEPA filter to remove pollutants. Make sure to clean filters regularly!

Some household plants are natural air purifiers such as: spider plants, dracaenas, philodendra, common ivy, aloe vera, and rubber plants. Wipe with a damp cloth periodically to keep them filtering efficiently. Make sure there is no mould growth on the soil. If there is, remove the top soil and replace with fresh potting earth;

Choose renovations and construction material with low VOCs and that are the least toxic.

Mould

A Pervasive Issue

Half of all buildings have water damage, and one-fourth of the population have genes that can't make antibodies to mycotoxins released by mould spores. In addition, mould is a severe contributor to indoor air pollution. It can grow inside walls, behind cabinets and under sinks for a long time before you even know it is there.

There are hundreds of species of moulds, some of which are toxic or allergy producing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) advises that no one should tolerate living with a source of mould in their home. Mould produces spores, which float in the air and settle in the dust in your home. Mould spores are often toxic and may cause a range of health problems including respiratory illness.

Symptoms of a Mould Issue

Fatigue

Shortness of breath, sneezing

Tachycardia, palpitations

Rashes, itchy eyes, headaches, migraines, histamine type reactions

Gut issues (diarrhea, constipation, heart burn, abdominal pain)

Weight gain/loss

Brain fog, poor concentration, word figuring issues and cognitive issues

Ice-pick stabbing pain in head and other body parts

Immune dysfunction (constant infections, chronic illness)

Mould grows in humidity levels above 70%. Here are some tips to detect and prevent mould:

– Control humidity by using a hygrometer (available at your local hardware store) to measure humidity levels. Humidity should be between 30 and 55 degrees, closer to 30 in the winter. Remember that a reading in the middle of the room may be lower than one taken near a window or behind furniture;

– Increase ventilation or use a dehumidifier to get ride of excess humidity, but make sure to clean it regularly to prevent mould growth;

– Use toxin-free anti-mould paints that prevent mould;

– Repair leaks and address water infiltration immediately;

– Make sure the home is draining properly, that gutters and down spouts are draining away from the home, and that the soil is graded away from the home;

– If you suspect mould in your home, get professional help to investigate, complete testing and resolve the issue in a safe and timely manner.

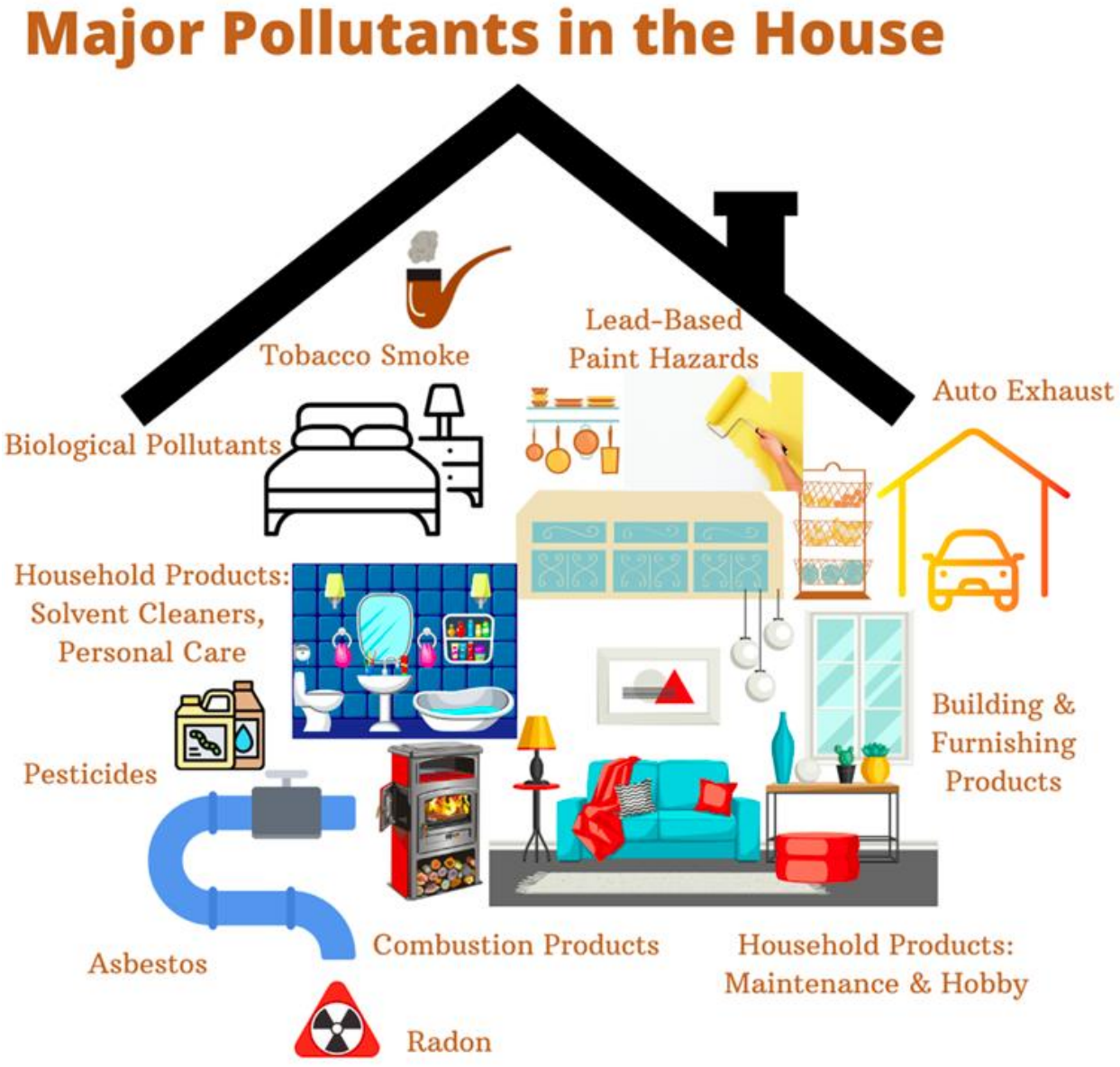
Other toxins

– **Radon** is a serious problem in homes across the country. You can use a test kit to determine if radon is present in your home. Fortunately, the problem is relatively easy to correct and eliminate.

– Lead paint is found in older homes and is especially harmful to children and pregnant women. If the paint is chipping, or you want to remove lead paint, consider hiring an expert to do it. If you do it yourself, follow carefully specific safety guidelines available here. It is important to note to keep your family out of the house until the clean up is complete and a professional cleaning of the entire house has been done. Remember to seal off your air ducts before work begins and open them only after a through clean up. If there is a leak from your ceiling and your suspect that there could be lead in the paint, consider this a hazard and take precautions.

– **Asbestos** is a natural fiber used in household products. It can be found in insulation in older homes, or in vermiculite insulation in attics or roofs. Never disturb asbestos or vermiculite insulation or try to remove it yourself. Call a professional immediately. There is a disagreement among professionals about whether or not it is safe to leave asbestos products undisturbed in homes.

– **Carbon monoxide** is poisonous, but exposure can be prevented with good ventilation and proper maintenance of fuel-burning appliances. In addition to having smoke alarms detectors in your home, make sure to have carbon monoxide detectors as well and change batteries regularly. If you have a garage attached to your house, it is a safe practice not to park your car or store chemicals, including pesticides, inside the garage, as fumes and/or chemicals can enter your home.



Safe Alternatives

<u>Floors and cupboards</u>

– Hard surface flooring (tile, hardwood) is preferable. Avoid carpeting, which retains mold and dust. There are now many water-based sealants and oils on the market for hardwood floors;

– Avoid pressed woods with glue that has formaldehyde in cupboards. Alternative products are available.

Walls

– Avoid vinyl or vinyl-coated wallpaper;

– Strip off old papers and use VOC-free paints.

Windows

– Choose something that can be cleaned easily. Cotton curtains can be laundered frequently; metal blinds are low emission and can block electromagnetic waves;

– Avoid vinyl and any fabric that needs to be dry cleaned;

– Check your windows for condensation and mould growth;

– Increasing ventilation will improve your condensation problem, but mould must be removed at the source.

Furniture

– Most furniture today is at least partially constructed from particle board or medium density fiberboard (MDF), or manufactured wood products which contain significant amounts of urea formaldehyde glues;

– Keep this in mind when purchasing furniture and look for real wood or other, healthier alternatives, such as second-hand furniture;

– For waxing furniture from kitchen cupboards to fine mahogany: mix 1/3 cup lemon juice to 2/3 olive oil. Let the cleaner/polish set overnight and buff in the morning.

Closets

– Try not to cramp your closets so full that it is difficult for air to circulate. An area with “dead air” is an invitation for mould and mildew to grow. This is especially true if your closet is on an outside wall, as the temperature is likely to be colder and condensation is more likely;

– Mothballs, deodorizers and other chemical “protectants” for your clothes have no place in your closet. Clean and well-aired clothing will not need deodorizers and is less attractive to moths.

The Bed

– Standard mattresses contain foam, other synthetic materials and/or flame retardants;

– Many people are now choosing to buy organic cotton or natural latex mattresses, or organic cotton futons. Organic cotton, silk and wool bedding and pillows are now available to replace synthetic fabrics.

Laundry Methods

– Standard laundry detergents contain toxic chemicals which end up in the water;

– Non-toxic brands of laundry detergent are available in health food stores;

– If you are allergic to dust, your water temperature needs to be between 140- and 160 degrees Fahrenheit to kill dust mites and their particles;

– Avoid fabric softeners. Vinegar works well in the rinse cycle to remove soap residue and soften fabrics;

– For static cling, try using a ball of aluminum foil (shiny side out) in your dryer. Do not over-dry your clothes.

Bathroom

– Anti-chlorine charcoal filters are available for showers;

– Keep the bathroom well-ventilated and avoid excess humidity;

– Make sure your tub and shower are sealed properly. Replace worn caulking around the edge of the tub or shower;

– Most personal care products (shampoos, deodorants, soaps, hair products, perfumes, cosmetics) contain harmful chemicals. More natural products are available at health food stores. You can find safe alternatives to cosmetics at www.safecosmetics.org.

Ventilation

– Keep your home well-ventilated, keeping doors and windows open in summer, or use a mechanical ventilation system if you live in a tightly-sealed home;

– Do not allow smoking in your home;

– Make use of exhaust fans and range hoods.

Computers

– If you are buying a new computer, choose a company which has stopped using flame retardants, PBDEs are highly toxic chemicals which persist in the dust in your home or office;

– Be aware that toners and ink emit chemical gases and ensure your office is well ventilated.

General maintenance

– Frequent dusting and vacuuming of all surfaces are important. Dusting with a slightly damp cloth will keep the dust from flying around for you to breathe. Rinse the dusting cloth frequently in running water to avoid spreading harmful chemicals in the dust;

– Use baking soda, vinegar, or one of the many non-toxic cleaners on the market to clean your home.

HEALTHY ECOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS: CLEANING

Prevention tips:

Keep the house clean – especially the kitchen and bathroom

Empty garbage cans everyday

Store food in containers with fitting lids

Don't leave overripe fruit on the counter

Repair leaks to avoid moisture problems

Fill holes and cracks to prevent insects from entering

Remove any firewood and tree branches in contact with the house

Safe and environmentally friendly ingredients:

Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda): General cleaner, removes satins, deodorizes, unclog drains

Sodium carbonate (washing soda): General cleaner, removes stains, removes grease very easily

Vinegar: Removes grease, disinfects, kills mould and mildew, and softens fabrics

Lemon: Removes grease and stains

Salt: Scours and disinfects

Cornstarch: Deodorizes, removes grease stains and stiffens fabrics

Clean & Green. The Complete

Guide to Nontoxic and Environmentally Safe Housekeeping – Annie Berthold Bond

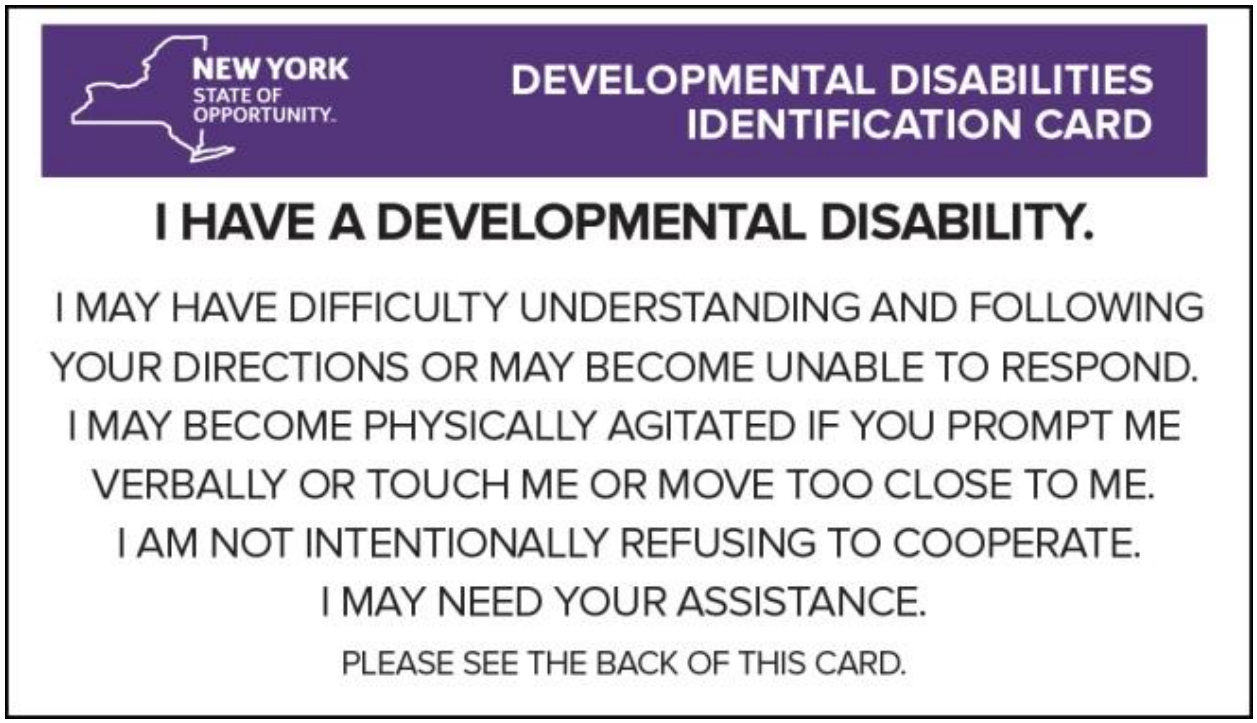
Self-Identification for Persons with Disabilities

- Self-diagnosis alone is insufficient:

  Courts have ruled that a self-diagnosis, without supporting medical documentation, is not enough to prove a disability under the ADA.
- The ADA requires medical documentation:

  To establish a disability, individuals typically need to provide documentation from a medical professional confirming the condition and its impact on their ability to perform essential functions.

NYS ID


NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY.
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
IDENTIFICATION CARD
I HAVE A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY.
I MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING AND FOLLOWING
YOUR DIRECTIONS OR MAY BECOME UNABLE TO RESPOND.
I MAY BECOME PHYSICALLY AGITATED IF YOU PROMPT ME
VERBALLY OR TOUCH ME OR MOVE TOO CLOSE TO ME.
I AM NOT INTENTIONALLY REFUSING TO COOPERATE.
I MAY NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE.
PLEASE SEE THE BACK OF THIS CARD.


HOLDER INFO
JOHN DOE
33 Main Street, Anywhere NY 10001
DOB: 1/10/2019
Emergency Contact: Jane Doe
Phone: 518-123-4567
Additional Information: Non-verbal, does not make eye contact, does not like to
be touched, is non-violent, likes to be called Johnny, Pica, uses a wheelchair
This card is issued pursuant to Mental Hygiene Law section 13.43. It confers no rights to, nor establishes any eligibility for, developmental disability services. This card is to be used solely to assist the holder in interactions with law enforcement or emergency services personnel.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower
Please visit: *hdsunflowers.com*

Memorial Day Parade

MOTION: To approve the Commision to participate in the 2025 Ridgefield Memorial Parade.

Motion by Michael. Second by Debra

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Public Comment. - none

Adjourn. 6:15 PM

2025 Meeting Dates:

		June 9
July n/a	**Aug n/a**	**Sept 8**
Oct 6	**Nov 10**	**Dec 8**

All meetings are Via Zoom on Monday of the dates above at 5:00 PM.

Minutes by Don Ciota

Commission for Accessibility
Meeting Agenda
Monday, May 12, 2025 5:00PM