

Fact or Myth # 1

Many people believe that chemical injury (chemical sensitivity) is a psychiatric disorder. They claim that it is erroneous to think that the symptoms experienced are caused by exposure to toxic chemicals found in some consumer products, such as perfume, laundry detergent, or fabric softener. Often statements are made such as, “No one can be allergic to that many things”; and “It’s all in their head.”

So, is chemical sensitivity a psychiatric disorder? No! That perception is part of a discrediting campaign by the chemical/pharmaceutical industry, which began in earnest in 1990. The actual fact is that it is a very real physiological health condition, that has devastating consequences on the lives of all those affected. Let’s not forget that diabetes was once considered a psychiatric condition before the medical researchers did their homework and discovered that it was an endocrine disorder – a very real physiological health condition. A similar scenario is being played out in chemical sensitivity.

In a nut shell, chemical sensitivity is the body’s alarm system, warning the individual that their body is becoming increasingly poisoned. The reactions that are experienced are toxic reactions – not allergic reactions. Consequently, chemical sensitivity is now frequently called chemical injury.

Everyone is familiar with the pain sensation that is experienced when we put our hand on a hot stove. The pain sensation is the body’s alarm system warning us to remove our hand from the hot stove before further injury occurs. It is warning us that we will experience a greater injury if our hand remains on the hot stove.

Likewise, the toxic reaction experienced by the chemically injured individual is the body’s alarm system warning the individual to remove his/her self from the toxic environment before further injury occurs. It is warning the individual that he/she will experience a greater injury if he/she remains in the toxic environment.

Chemically injured individuals are ones who have become poisoned by the toxic chemicals they encounter on a daily basis. Their body becomes overloaded with the toxic chemicals to which they have been exposed. They either cannot metabolize and eliminate these toxic chemicals or have a very difficult time doing so. Consequently, these toxic chemicals become stored in the tissues of their body and they enter a poisoned condition.

Fact or Myth # 2

Frequently, the reactions that a chemically injured person will experience are referred to as an allergic reaction. So is it an allergic reaction? No! Toxic chemicals are poisons. People are not allergic to poisons; people are poisoned by poisons. Therefore, the reactions that are experienced upon exposure are toxic reactions, not allergic reactions.

Toxic reactions are quite varied depending on the inherent characteristics of the toxic chemicals to which a person has been exposed. Various combinations of organ systems may be affected. The severity of the toxic reactions depend on how poisoned the person’s body is at the time of exposure.

The toxic reactions are informing the person that chemical injury is occurring and there is a need to leave the toxic environment before greater injury occurs. The person must be removed from the toxic environment and relocated to an area of good air quality.

Fact or Myth # 3

Another theory is that some emotional trauma or emotional stress in the person's life either caused or was a strong contributing factor to the person becoming chemically sensitive. The health practitioners that follow this theory state that emotional healing is necessary for effective treatment of chemical sensitivity. Consequently, they strongly recommend professional counselling.

Is this theory true? No! There are tiny infants and toddlers who are severely chemically sensitive. Yet, they may not have lived through any emotional trauma. In fact, many of them are in very loving, supportive families. Chemically Injured individuals – including infants, toddlers, children, teens, adults, and the elderly – are simply individuals who have become poisoned by the toxic chemicals they have encountered on a daily basis.

Emotional trauma or emotional stress can have an impact in many, many different types of health conditions, for example, emotional issues can affect cardiovascular disease. However, these emotional issues are side issues to the actual treating of the cardiovascular disease. In chemical sensitivity, if there are any emotional issues, they are side issues to the actual treating of the chemical sensitivity, in the exact same way that they are side issues in other health conditions. Emotional healing is not a pre-requisite to effective treatment of chemical sensitivity. In fact, focusing on emotional healing can derail other treatments. As with all other health conditions, emotional healing is a good step to take and it will help to improve one's overall health; but it does not usually need top priority – it is a side issue.

Fact or Myth # 4

The government allows products containing toxic chemicals to be on the store shelves and sold in Canada. Therefore they must be safe. Products, such as pesticides, state they are safe if used according to the manufacturer's instructions. So people who get sick from them probably were not following the manufacturer's instructions.

Is this perception and belief accurate? No! This thinking is quite biased in favour of the manufacturer of the product. The word "toxic" means poison. Therefore, toxic chemicals are chemicals that are poison to the human body. Poison is poison to everyone; but some people have a greater tolerance level than others. Toxic chemicals found in many consumer products are not safe for those who have crossed their body's toxic threshold.

The only difference between a chemically injured person and other people, who are not showing noticeable effects of exposure to toxic chemicals, is that a chemically injured person's body has crossed its toxic threshold; and it is giving him/her a very loud warning signal, saying "Do not put more poison into this body." Other people who are not showing noticeable effects from exposure have not hit their body's toxic threshold yet.

Poison is poison to everyone; but some people have a greater tolerance level than others.

Fact or Myth # 5

Frequently, the terms “natural remedies” and “alternative remedies” are used interchangeably and are viewed as being the same. So are they the same? No! They are not the same. In actual fact, there is a lot of difference between the two, and they should never be used interchangeably. Therefore we need to learn how to distinguish between the two terms.

First, we need to define the term “alternative”. It alludes to being an alternative to the conventional. Alternative remedies include both natural remedies, as well as remedies based on eastern religious philosophies. Remedies such as yoga, meditation, mindfulness, homeopathy, acupuncture, reflexology, energy medicine, and so on have a supernatural component to them. Frequently, they involve “channelling the powers of the universe to heal.” So alternative remedies is an umbrella term that covers both natural remedies and supernatural remedies; and they are viewed as an alternative to conventional remedies.

However, natural does not mean alternative. Natural remedies are just that – natural. They can also be referred to as “old-fashioned remedies”. Examples are: diet, rest, exercise, vitamins and minerals, herbs, other supplements, hot or cold treatments, saunas, and so on. Many of these treatments are used today in a conventional medical environment. For example, if a patient is low in potassium, the doctor might recommend eating bananas regularly or might prescribe a potassium supplement. If a patient sprains an ankle, the doctor might recommend putting an ice pack on it. If a patient has a lot of skin irritations, a doctor might prescribe soaking in an oatmeal bath.

The chemically injured individuals require natural remedies to assist their bodies to heal, as they must reduce their use of conventional, pharmaceutical remedies as much as possible. However, when the natural remedy is not adequate to accomplish the goal, then conventional remedies are implemented, using the least toxic options.

Health treatment protocols should not be dependent on the religion or the philosophy that a person embraces. Therefore, it is inaccurate to state that the chemically injured need alternative remedies, as they do not require the supernatural remedies for healing.

Consequently, it is much more accurate to state that the chemically injured do require natural remedies, with the rare back up of conventional treatments.