

Frequently when someone reacts to perfume or to other consumer products that contain toxic chemicals, it is assumed that he/she is having an allergic reaction. However, there is a strong possibility that his/her reaction is not an allergic reaction, but a toxic reaction. In both allergic reactions and toxic reactions, there is the similar experience of being exposed to something and having a reaction to that exposure. Although the two types of reactions may have some similarities, they are very different.

A toxic reaction is the body's alarm system, warning the individual that their body is becoming increasingly poisoned.

Toxic chemicals are poisons. People are not allergic to poisons; people are poisoned by poisons. A chemically injured individual is a person who has become poisoned by the toxic chemicals they encounter on a daily basis. It might occur as a result of a one-time major exposure; or it might occur very slowly, over many years of low-level exposures to toxic chemicals. 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. This process can happen rapidly or it can happen very slowly over many years.

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

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. The degree of pain or injury that we will experience will depend on how hot the stove is, how long our hand is on it, and our general overall health status.

Likewise, a toxic reaction is the body's alarm system warning us to remove ourselves from the toxic environment before further injury occurs. It is warning us that we will experience a greater injury if we remain in the toxic environment. The degree of toxic reaction we experience will depend on the potency of the toxic chemical, the length of time of the exposure to the toxic chemical, and our general overall health status.

Toxic reactions are quite varied depending on the inherent characteristics of the toxic chemicals to which a person has been exposed. For example, if a person has been exposed to neurotoxins, which are poisons affecting the nervous system, then a person might experience one or more of the following symptoms: numbness, pins and needles sensation, tingling, muscle spasms, muscle weakness, cognitive difficulties, speech difficulties, headache, migraine, dizziness and/or other neurological difficulties.

Since every system of the body can be targeted and affected, the list of possible symptoms is quite large. Some other common symptoms are: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, flu-like symptoms, breathing difficulties, asthma, high or low blood sugar levels, high or low blood pressure, muscle and joint pain, thermal difficulties, forgetfulness, and the list continues on. A person might experience only one or two symptoms or they might experience a large number of these symptoms. Since many consumer products contain many different toxic chemicals, it is possible for a number of different systems of the body to be affected at the exact same time. The degree of the toxic reaction experienced varies greatly from person to person.

The huge challenge faced every day by the chemically injured individual is to successfully avoid exposure to toxic chemicals and to successfully avoid a toxic reaction. Toxic chemicals (poisons) are found in the majority of consumer products, including but not limited to: perfume, cologne, personal care products, laundry products, clothing, air fresheners, disinfectants, hand sanitizers, household and industrial cleansers, carpets, household furniture, home building supplies, new vehicle interiors, bug repellents, pesticides, and so on. Toxic chemicals can even be found in our food and in our water.

Typically, to succeed in this huge challenge, the chemically injured person must modify his/her lifestyle; and begin living a low-toxicity lifestyle. A low-toxicity lifestyle strives to minimize, as much as possible, exposure to consumer products containing toxic chemicals.

Since chemical injury is preventable and acquired, we strongly advise everyone to take steps to minimize the risk of becoming chemically injured. We reduce this risk by changing our lifestyle to a low-toxicity lifestyle. The more a person reduces his/her exposure to toxic chemicals, the more he/she will reduce the risk of becoming injured by toxic chemicals. We strongly encourage everyone to search out consumer products that have a low toxic chemical content or no toxic chemical content; and then switch to using these products.