

MCS Story
Peter J. Neufeld, Hutchinson, Kansas, Age 77

I have a chronic illness called Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS).

According to Dr. William Rea, director of the Dallas Environmental Health Center, my immune system became overloaded with chemicals and thus is malfunctioning. I am allergic to many chemicals as well as weeds and some trees and grasses. I'm also allergic to electricity in some forms.

This illness is life-altering. I cannot use a computer, watch television, or listen to the radio. I have to turn off the washer, dryer, and refrigerator when I'm in the kitchen. At night, I turn off the electricity in my bedroom.

I am allergic to perfume, deodorant, after shave, scented soaps, hair perms and anything containing formaldehyde. Thus I cannot attend public meetings such as church services and my grandchildren's school functions.

I am also allergic to carbon monoxide and have difficulty driving in traffic. In the evening when the air gets heavy, car fumes and other city pollutants come into our house so I usually go to bed early.

I miss our church services and Sunday School class and the fellowship with Christian friends. We generally cannot have friends in our home because they carry in pollutants. Our family prepares themselves before they come in so that I can tolerate them. In good weather, I can visit with friends outdoors on our deck.

It is helpful to have the pastors come to visit, as well as deacons and other church members. Many church members have assured me of their prayers. Our church has a good library and I have read many of their books. The church has also been very supportive of my wife, Onalee.

I have had MCS about six years. I believe it started when I noticed foul smells and burning lips and mouth when I encountered car exhausts in town and wood smoke and other chemicals.

I spent a month in Dallas, Texas with Dr. Rea, a specialist in environmental illness. He does testing of allergies, as well as research and treatment.

My most irritating problems with this illness are the constant bad smells. There was a time when I had difficulty smelling anything before my illness. Now I'm so very sensitive to many things and it is hard to tolerate.

On a positive note, I'm not severely limited in physical activity. I walk every day, generally in the country after a hard freeze when I'm not allergic to weeds. I'm allergic to ink, but I can read when I place the book under glass.

My faith in God is often severely tested, but I know from Scripture that God loves me and helps and sustains me 24 hours at a time.

See next page for Caregiver Story



Caregiver Story **Onalee Neufeld, Hutchinson, Kansas, Age 72**

As you have read Peter's story of his illness, you can see that I have had to make major changes in my life style.

- We cannot have friends or relatives come in our house.
- Our children and grandchildren prepare them selves before they come.
- Our eating has changed as I buy organic food for Peter and he is allergic to many things.
- I go to all events outside the home without him.
- We do our washing and drying of clothes often at night when he is asleep.
- I wear no cosmetics, try and wear only cotton at home and use unscented soaps.
- Our carpet has been taken up and we have covered our upholstered furniture with cotton sheets.

I try and bring the world to Peter. This means I tell him what I heard from people I meet. Peter and I teach an adult Sunday School Class once a month. He writes an introduction and the questions for discussion and I bring it to the class.

It has not been easy, but Peter is a kind, gentle person, and I am committed to stay with Peter and help him, for this is what God's will is for me.

I have learned, in order to be a good support, that I have to keep busy, have an accepting attitude, stay a little removed (do some things for myself), and put all things in God's hands.