

How to Avoid Toxins

Mold Toxins:

It is estimated that about half of all buildings in this country have water damage, and that many of those contain enough of the molds that cause CIRS to result in illness in those who are susceptible. It is impossible to know if a building has the potential to make you ill without accurately testing it. The molds that cause CIRS are notoriously difficult to test for with traditional mold tests. Dr. Shoemaker has identified only one method that accurately identifies buildings that contain dangerous levels of toxin producing mold. And there is only one lab in the country that performs this test.

Have your home, and any other building that you spend more than 8 hours a week in tested through Mycometrics. Go to their online site and order a HERTSMI AccuCloth kit. It will cost about \$150. (They also have an ERMI test, which will hold up better in court if you are considering legal action with a landlord/school/employer. It is more expensive, \$250, but does not give any additional information that is useful from a medical perspective. It simply has more legal precedence.) Use the cloth to collect dust samples that have accumulated for 3 to 6 months. Good places to dust are the tops of door jams, window frames, picture frames, high bookshelves, ceiling fans. You may sample from all locations in your home using one kit (more cost effective), or alternatively, you can purchase multiple kits, and sample one floor at a time to better identify where a potential source of mold may be hiding. Once you have the results, send them to the office, and we will analyze them using Dr. Shoemaker's formula.

If any of your samples test at a borderline or dangerous level, you will need to evaluate your options to create a healthy environment for yourself. If you own a home that has tested positive, have a professional inspection with someone familiar with identifying and locating the molds that cause CIRS, and get an estimate of the cost to remediate. If you rent, or find the potential cost of remediation prohibitive, consider relocation.

Workplaces and schools that test positive are challenging for many reasons. This type of illness is poorly recognized by the community, and it is rare to find those in authority eager to learn more about this phenomenon or do anything about it. Telecommuting and home schooling are always options to consider.

Once the location of any mold has been determined, we recommend remediation with a professional team who is well versed with what is necessary to bring the mold levels into the "safe" range as determined by Dr. Shoemaker. We recommend:

For mold inspection

Jeff Bookout

Enviro Service Specialists

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Once your remediation is complete, or you have moved to a new environment, the new/remediated space will need to be tested using the same type of kit from Mycometrics. If you have remediated, you will need to do a thorough "micro-cleaning" so that all of the residual toxin has been removed from your environment. Then let the dust accumulate for a few weeks prior to repeating the Mycometrics test.

We strongly recommend against using anything other than Mycometrics and the professionals recommended above, as this is very likely to result in an environment that will continue to cause illness.

Other Toxins:

Although mold toxins are one of the most common reasons for CIRS, there are other toxins that can accumulate and cause inflammation when detox pathways are genetically compromised - especially when both HLA DR and Methylation pathway genes are affected. If you have CIRS it is best to also avoid the following both for now, while you are healing, and for the rest of your life as much as possible:

Phthalates: (The Ph is silent)

These are chemicals used in soaps, lotions, cosmetics, fragrances, hair products, nail polish, etc. that are highly toxic. Regardless of whether or not you have CIRS, these substances are known hormonal and endocrine disruptors and should be avoided by everyone. Studies have linked them with infertility, low sperm count, small testicular size, and other hormonal imbalances.

If you have CIRS, you have an additional incentive to avoid these toxins, as they will also contribute significantly to the chronic inflammation in your body, and continued exposure will lead to prolonged illness.

To learn which personal care products to avoid, go to The Environmental Working Group website: EWG.org and use their search engine for over 60,000 products.

Plastics:

As with Phthalates, (which are in some plastics), plastics contain harmful chemicals that are known hormonal and endocrine disruptors. Again, as above, when you have CIRS, you are even more susceptible to damaging chronic health effects from these substances than others, as your body cannot clear these toxins adequately. Please avoid all plastics whenever possible. Do not eat or drink from plastic. Do not store food in plastic dishes. If you do use plastic for storage (i.e. ziplock baggies), make sure that food is at room temperature before storage. Never allow warm or hot food or liquids to come in contact with plastics!

For more information, go to EWG.org. Healthy Home Tips; Tip #3. "Pick plastics carefully".

Pesticides and Herbicides:

Please be 100% organic!!! I know that it is "politically correct" to simply avoid the "dirty dozen", but you are someone with CIRS. Your body's toxin clearing mechanisms are profoundly compromised. Even extremely small amounts of pesticides and herbicides (known neurotoxins and carcinogens) will accumulate in your body and contribute to the chronic inflammation that is causing your symptoms.

Not surprisingly, I am aware that many of you may believe that it is simply too expensive to be 100% organic. There are several ways to look at the bigger picture here:

- How expensive is your current illness? How much have you already spent trying to regain your health? What price would you put on your health? (Sorry to be so blunt)
- Also, being someone who made this transition about 10 years ago, I can tell you that overall I do not spend much more on food now than I did prior to becoming 100% organic. How can that be true you ask? Simple: I stopped eating out. For the majority of us, a look at our monthly expenses reveals that a significant portion goes to the purchase of food (and drink – read "Starbucks") that is not prepared at home. Being committed to eating 100% organic means preparing your own food, (and taking it with you if needed) as restaurant food is not organic. Yes, this takes some time and planning... And you will find that in a fairly short amount of time this will become a new way of life that does not feel burdensome, is surprisingly affordable, and that is supporting your choice to regain and maintain your health.

Of all the suggestions listed here, this is one of the most important. I suggest that you become 100% organic for the duration of your treatment. Once you have completed the protocol, and your MSH levels are more robust, and your symptoms have decreased significantly, a meal out now and then (twice a month) will have minimal effect.

Fluoride:

Make sure that all of the city tap water that you drink or cook with is filtered. The least expensive way to do this is with The ZeroWater System, a filter system, similar to Brita, but better. As long as the meter is reading at 004 or less, it is removing almost all of the Fluoride in your water. It is available at Target, Bed Bath and Beyond, and Walmart and the filters cost about \$15 every 6 weeks. If you can afford it, an under the sink reverse osmosis unit will remove all of the Fluoride for about \$500. Again, EWG.org has good information on water filters.

Gluten:

I am sure that many of you are already gluten free, having discovered that your symptoms are better when you avoid it. As someone with compromised detox pathways, gluten can have a profound effect on your symptoms. For you, it is a potent neurotoxin and contributes to the neuroinflammation that is at the heart of CIRS. If you are not currently 100% gluten free, please make this change. You will begin to feel the positive effects almost immediately, and it will support your overall healing as you progress through the protocol.

Sugar:

Again, because of your compromised detox pathways, the toxic effects of sugar and other processed sweeteners are much more profound for you than for others. You will heal more quickly and feel better sooner if you avoid all processed sweeteners. This includes: sugar, raw sugar, turbinado sugar, sucanat, whole cane sugar, processed honey, date sugar, rice syrup, barley malt syrup, high fructose corn syrup, evaporated cane juice, all artificial sweeteners (Splenda, NutraSweet, Truvia, aspartame), products sweetened with apple juice, grape juice, dates or raisins.

The following are OK: Coconut sugar, coconut syrup, pure maple syrup, raw honey, molasses, stevia. In recipes that call for dates, you may substitute dried apricots, organic and unsulfured, that have been soaked in hot water and drained.

Nightshades:

Nightshades are a group of vegetables belonging to the Solanaceae family. They contain cholinesterase inhibiting compounds that cause pain and inflammation. Again, because of the inherent problems with your detox pathways, these compounds affect you more than others. Nightshades include potatoes (not sweet potatoes or yams), tomatoes, eggplant, and all types of peppers (sweet peppers and spicy hot peppers). Although not truly nightshades, blueberries, huckleberries, gogi berries and ashwaganda all share the same inflammation inducing alkaloids. All of these should be avoided.

Microwaved Protein:

When proteins are microwaved, they become denatured and therefore toxic. Again, because your detox pathways are not functioning optimally, this affects you more than others. Please avoid using the microwave! If you would like more information about the original safety studies done on microwaves in the 1960's, do a search on EWG.org.

