

YOU BE THE JUDGE

As a patient dealing with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity or any other Environmentally-induced health condition, accessing medical assistance is difficult at the best of times. Receiving the necessary and appropriate information and/or treatments is even more of a challenge, if not next to impossible.

Many individuals looking for solutions are discovering that most 'promises' fall short, and sometimes these revelations occur after spending thousands of dollars. Patients with limited financial means or unimaginable symptoms, often complain that they feel like they're playing a game of Russian Roulette. Health and well-being are the cornerstones of every civilization, for without it, there is no quality of life.

Due to the complexity of these diseases, many if not most family physicians and "specialists" are not trained or equipped to comment on, let alone treat these issues.

This is not totally their faults – there is so much information being made available, as a practicing physician, keeping abreast of the best, latest, and most pertinent information takes valuable research time, and most doctors have limited time to do this while maintaining their practices. There are no generic 'pills' to hand out as cures to everyone – nor should there ever be. Everyone is different to some degree, and it is those nuances that make the difference between what works for one individual and what doesn't for another.

There are some individuals who are fortunate enough to obtain the services of truly empathetic, knowledgeable and competent physicians, who, though they may not possess any "absolute cures," demonstrate a holistic/team approach to addressing the needs of their patients.

When the appropriate solutions and treatments are discovered, it is these physicians who will provide the most feasible courses of action. Until such time that this occurs in all areas, patients initiating their own inquiries, can potentially stumble across "things" that work to alleviate their own symptoms.

This next page is hopefully a source of information that can assist more individuals in locating those "unique" physicians who have managed to successfully address some of the issues facing individuals with Environmental illnesses – wherever they may be. You be the judge!

Edie Hogarth, BSc

1. As a patient, you are treated with respect, patience, and empathy.
2. Medical Staff are efficient and courteous both in person and on the phone.
3. Wait times are minimal (less than 30 minutes).
4. Doctors do not have double-booked appointments, so your appointments are not rushed, unless an emergency arises.
5. General Appointments are more than 15 minutes.
6. As a patient, you have prepared a list of "important" questions and/or comments that would assist the physician in handling your concerns – so you don't forget something. (This is a common occurrence that takes up valuable time by both the physician and patient.)
7. As a patient, you have a diary (of sorts) where you note/rate how you are feeling on a daily basis. You specifically note any time of day when things are not right, or change (either for the better or worse). You also indicate what you were doing at the time you noticed any changes. Bring your diary with you to your appointments, as you can point out exactly when, where, and what was happening.
8. As a patient, if negative or unusual changes are appearing, you don't wait for a crisis situation to develop. You err on the side of caution, and see your physician immediately or seek paramedic assistance.
9. Information is presented to you by both the physician and his/her staff in a clear, concise, and pleasant manner.
10. As a patient, you express your understanding of everything the physician explains. You repeat instructions back to the physician for his concurrence.
11. As a patient, you ask the physician to either repeat an explanation you didn't hear, or provide a better explanation of what was mentioned.
12. As a patient, you never leave a physician's office confused as to his/her instructions. If you are still uncertain, you always ask the Medical Staff before you leave the office for clarification. The physician is available for a re-explanation, if the medical staff are themselves uncertain, or do not have the authority to provide an explanation.
13. Medical Staff are prompt in returning calls and/or relaying information directly to the physician.
14. The physician is prompt in having you, the patient, see him/her upon receiving crucial test/procedure results (within the same week).
15. The medical office is always clean, comfortable, and free from any triggers.
16. No Scent policies are enforced.
17. As a patient, you are given updates or informed of the latest research results that could impact your health as they pertain to your specific situation.
18. Consultations to other specialists are expedited quickly (in less than one month).
19. Lab procedures are expedited quickly (that day or within one week).
20. Surgical procedures are expedited quickly (in less than 4 weeks).

21. When prescriptions are provided, your physician has access to a CPS database, to confirm that the “fillers” present are safer, and non-petroleum (less toxic) medication is being considered. A pharmacist is a patient’s best source of information regarding medications and their interactions with other oral supplements.
22. As a patient, you always ask a pharmacist about what it is you are being asked to take, especially if it is a new medication for you. Be sure the prescription is legible (if a written one is provided to you). Medication errors are commonly the result of illegible prescriptions, as many medications have very similar spellings, with variations being in just one or two letters. Many individuals have become extremely ill and/or have died as a result of poor handwriting or wrong medication names being entered into computers.
23. As a patient, you check your medications regularly to make sure there are no outdated pills in your home; and those that are not used, are returned to a Pharmacy for disposal. You do not throw ANY medications into the toilet or garbage.
24. You as a patient, feel you can trust your doctor, and that he/she is doing everything responsibly to keep your information secure and confidential. Your documents are not being forwarded through general post to third parties; special couriers are always used.
25. When your physician is not available, another qualified physician/colleague is present on site, who is familiar with environmental health issues and can stand in on your physician’s behalf, if required.

The relationship between a patient and a doctor is a special one. If for whatever reason you feel there is a communication breakdown, or obstacles present themselves, attempt to clarify any misunderstandings early on.

Being that we are all human, personality clashes can undermine any working relationship, and when this happens between a physician and a patient, the consequences can be devastating. Finding a new physician in the middle of a health crisis is a common occurrence for individuals dealing with Environmental illnesses, and this is unacceptable. On the other hand, when you have a wonderful relationship, the results are amazing.

What are your doctors like? What do your physicians do or say that rates them above others, in your opinion? Would you recommend them? Tell us briefly about your physicians IF you think they deserve recognition.

Let’s create a (global) working directory that leads individuals to the necessary and qualified, respected medical/health professionals, wherever they may reside.

