

## MCS House Rules

When your MCS friend or relative makes specific requests regarding visitors (YOU!) in his living space, be prepared to follow these rules exactly. Ignoring or violating these rules is dangerous to your friend and demonstrates disregard and disrespect for an ill person who did not choose to live under strict environmental limitations but must do so in order to stay alive.

- Remove your shoes if requested to do so. Imagine having to get onto your hands and knees to wash the floor or hauling out the vacuum cleaner time and time again just because your guest carelessly disregarded the simple request to remove his shoes. Now imagine being chronically ill and having to do this chore. It doesn't leave us much energy to be able to care for ourselves or perhaps even to pursue an enjoyable activity! It also costs us money for cleaning products and for the electricity to run the washing machine to launder the rags and to run the vacuum cleaner. On a disability income, your MCS friend cannot afford this kind of unnecessary monetary expenditure.
- DO NOT enter the living space wearing ANY scented products including ones which have been picked up on your clothing during the course of the day. Odors that you might not notice or that you consider to be inconsequential are dangerous to your MCS friend. Your entry into the home of your MCS friend must be carefully discussed and worked out in advance of your visit. You might have to bring a change of clothes or keep "safe" clothing at his house. Besides the potential life-threatening danger of chemicals being introduced into your MCS friend's living space, he must again expend his own and the utility company's energy to clean up the contamination. This typically involves stripping and laundering furniture barrier covers, rugs, and other linens, running air cleaners,

washing every item that you have handled during your visit, and then spending time (and electricity) using the oxygen concentrator to recover. Would you as an able-bodied person want to repeat your entire spring cleaning ritual every time someone entered your home? Neither do we! – and we don't have the physical stamina to do so.

- If your MCS friend requires that your visit be a scheduled appointment or that you call before coming, do not show up unannounced and expect to be let in or to have the door opened to you. It is enough of an upheaval for your MCS friend to have anyone in the house – even with an appointment. Remember that his house is medically modified to accommodate MCS and that any deviation from this set-up can be hazardous to his health. Unfortunately, social spontaneity is not possible with MCS and strict adherence to a schedule is mandatory in order to effectively gauge and utilize our limited daily energy. We do not like to be inhospitable and if you unexpectedly appear at the door, we might let down our guard and allow you to enter – with dire consequences for us later. Please do not put us in the position of choosing between our health and your feelings.
- If your visit involves your bringing paperwork into the house, please have it enclosed in barrier paper such as an aired out plastic bag or a cellophane bag. Paper and ink are problem materials for your MCS friend. Paper can also be perfumed, have come into contact with other perfumed papers, or have been handled by a person who uses scented hand lotion. We are used to airing out papers and all sorts of other items – and we are willing to do so when necessary – but please do not surprise us by bringing unenclosed papers, phone books, catalogues, advertising flyers, or carbonless copy paper into our living space.
- Do not bring ANY item into the living space unless it has been discussed and cleared ahead of time.

Each MCS-disabled person has his own mandatory house rules. These are in place to allow him to function to the extent of his physical capability. You surely wish the best for your friend or relative. Understanding that his requirements are in place for good reason will help you both maintain a safe and satisfying relationship.