

Avoiding Environmental Toxins

As I said in the Supplements handout, everyone who has Lyme disease, tic borne chronic infections, and/or chronic inflammatory illness/mold toxicity by definition has very significant problems with several detox pathways and also with some important aspects of immune function. Although mold toxins are number one on the list of toxins that are important for you to avoid, there are also other toxins that can accumulate in your body, causing inflammation and significantly hindering your healing process. If you have an inflammatory multi-symptom/multi-system illness, it is best to also avoid the following toxins both for now, while you are healing, and for the rest of your life:

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 an inflammatory illness, 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 a chronic inflammatory illness, you have an additional incentive to avoid these toxins, as they will also contribute significantly to the 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, because of your illness 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 a chronic inflammatory illness. 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. Also, Glyphosate, better known as "Roundup", is a powerful immune disruptor and is a major factor in creating the "hyper-sensitivity/hyper-reactivity" that is commonly seen in these types of illnesses. If this hyper-reactivity is triggered, treatment becomes much more challenging and often takes longer. Not surprisingly, I am aware that many of you will 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 and drinking alcohol (alcohol is very inflammatory). 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" and that glass of wine with dinner) 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 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 your symptoms have decreased significantly and you are in remission, a meal out now and then (twice a month) will have minimal effect.

Fluoride:

Fluoride is another powerful immune disruptor and also leaches your bones of calcium. 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 Flouride for about \$500. I also recommend Berkey filters. They are considerably better than The Zero System, and unlike reverse osmosis, allow you to retain the beneficial minerals in the water. A countertop unit is about \$250 and will require periodic filter changes. Again, EWG.org has good information on water filters.