

HYPERSENSITIVITY

Are you sensitive to changes in temperature or irritating fumes and vapors? I was often asked about this when I worked for CNN as their Allergy Consultant. The email question below may help you to understand why you feel the way you do.

Dear Dr. Kagen,

I am a 43 yr. old female with Graves disease. For the past year, I have been plagued with sinus pain, pressure, vertigo, nausea. Been treated for sinus infection, ear infection, told I had a virus, and the latest, I was told I had allergies. Went for allergy testing, X-rays, and the scratch tests showed I wasn't allergic to anything. I take Claritin, Sudafed, Flonase, sometimes Clartin-D.

These medicines help my symptoms, but they have their own side effects-one of them being, they interfere with the Synthroid, I take for the Graves disease, and recently I became hypothyroid. When I saw my Endocrinologist for this last week, he said he still thought I was allergic to something and wants me to see another allergist.

What would another allergist do that the first one didn't? Should I just wait it out, and keep taking the Claritin and hope I get better? I do feel better than I did a year ago, but I still feel sick to one degree or another every day. I am getting very discouraged. Any advice you could give would be greatly appreciated.

Approximately 40% of "normal" people have what I call a Wet Head with too much mucus in their throat, runny nose, congested sinuses, fluid in their ears and frequent colds and sinus infections. But if you were tested and have no allergies, why is your head so wet?

There are several causes of a Wet Head, one of which is gastro-esophageal reflux or GERD. When stomach acid backs up into the chest where it does not belong your sinuses and nose will make more mucus to wash the acid down into your stomach.

People who are very sensitive to changes in the weather, air pollution and hormone level changes also have Wet Heads, and often have the following symptoms:

- * Sensitive eyes in sunlight (sunglasses are a must)
- * Sensitive to alcohol (a cheap date)
- * Can easily smell odors and irritants that others cannot
- * Sensitive to changes in humidity and temperature
- * Very ticklish even from across the room
- * Cold feet at night (wear socks to bed)
- * Sensitive to small changes in hormone levels (can feel when they ovulate)
- * A runny nose when inhaling cold air
- * Tired and sleepy by midday
- * Sensitive to medications (small doses are often effective) and
- * If anything changes inside or outside of your body, you can feel it.

So, if you need to wear sunglasses when you are outside in the sun and sleep with socks on, you may be very sensitive to anything that changes inside or outside of your body.

There is no X-ray or blood test available to determine if you have Hypersensitivity. It is a clinical diagnosis based on a combination of your answers to 10 questions in the Sensitivity Test and measuring how your eyes react to light using the Sensitometer™. The Sensitivity Test and Sensitometer are available at www.Sensitometer.com

Here is an example of someone's 10-question Sensitivity Test result.

Your Degree of Sensitivity is **9**



This means you have a **Very High** Degree of Hypersensitivity.

You are extremely sensitive to anything that changes inside or outside of your body – any little change is a big change.

People with Hypersensitivity often respond to combinations of the following:

1. Atrovent (**ipratropium**) or AstePro (**azelastine**) sprayed into the nose 1 – 4 times daily, especially 30 minutes before going from one environment to another.
2. **Sunglasses** to control the amount of light entering the eyes.
3. **Warm Tea** (1/3 cup) helps prevent sensitive people from having a Wet Head.
4. **Darkness** for 5 minutes at noon (hold hands over the eyes).
5. **Magnesium Oxide** (250 mg) twice daily – but not taken with calcium since calcium may inhibit magnesium absorption. Magnesium relaxes smooth muscle cells in the bladder, intestines, uterus and lungs and may help prevent migraine headaches.

I hope this information helps you better understand Hypersensitivity.

Steve Kagen, M.D.
Allergy and Asthma Specialist