

My Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity (EHS)

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I hold a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from Oklahoma State University, and taught in the EECE Department at Kansas State University from 1966 to 1994. This document is an account of my physical reactions to electric fields. For proper background, I need to start with my food intolerances.

Before I started the third grade, I developed an intolerance to milk, (unpasteurized, fresh from the family cow). It gave me a low grade fever, a stomach ache, and fatigue or lack of stamina, such that I was unable to go to school. At one stage, I spent a few days in the hospital for tests, and watched the medical profession give up on me. I *knew* that I was going to die! Some would agree that that experience warped my little personality! I made my peace with God, accepting the fact that I was definitely going to die, most likely before I finished High School. I also came to believe that God does not make mistakes, that I was put together ‘just right’ for my time on earth. I was to live life abundantly (John 10:10), and not complain about my limitations. Another way of describing my mindset was that I wanted to be the best possible child of God, performing assigned tasks to the best of my ability, so He would recognize me when I showed up at the pearly gates. I was obviously wrong about the date of my demise, but that decision has worked out very well in my life, and I have recommended it highly to others over the years.

My dad listened to the doctors talking about doing exploratory surgery on my stomach to find out why it was hurting. His education ended with grade school, but he was not stupid. He recognized arrogance and incompetence when he saw it. He waited until the doctors went home, picked me up out of the hospital bed, and took me home. He told the nurse at the desk to send him a bill, as he walked out with me. I am convinced that his action literally saved my life. Nowadays, of course, Big Pharma would throw my dad in jail and cut on me until they killed me.

Eventually a chiropractor discovered the milk intolerance. By not drinking milk I was able to function in school and successfully completed the third grade the next year. The intolerance to cheese, yogurt, and milk cooked in food has varied over the years. There have been times that a tablespoon of milk in the mashed potatoes sent me to bed for 24 hours with flu symptoms, but other times the same amount did not seem to be a problem. Most years the cheese on a cheeseburger or the individual sized container of yogurt seems to work. For many years one dip of a premium ice cream (Breyers Butter Pecan) seemed to have no negative effect. All other brands, and other flavors of Breyers, definitely made me feel worse.

But just a couple of years ago, Breyers Butter Pecan joined the Do Not Eat list.

My experience over the years is that the medical profession is still incompetent in dealing with food intolerances. For the past 70 years, every time that I went to a MD with complaints that resulted from food intolerances, the story was the same. I underwent a number of expensive and disgusting tests with 'inconclusive' results. I had to discover the offending food item on my own, by avoidance and challenge tests. There have been times where I went on a diet of white rice, white chicken meat, and canned pears for weeks, keeping a careful journal of the effects of adding one food item at a time. It has been a moving target, in the sense that one food item will stop bothering me while another food item will start. At one time or another, coffee gave me colon spasms, bananas gave me headaches, gluten gave me constipation and fatigue, something else gave me smooth muscle spasms in the chest, and cherries gave me hives on the palms of my hands. A number of foods would just give me a general feeling of ill health, somewhat like the feeling when you are just coming down with the flu.

About half the time, I would feel worse after going out to eat. But one particular Chinese restaurant in Manhattan, Kansas made me feel better. Evidently some food item had some nutrient in it that my body needed. For at least a year I ate lunch there once a week, for medicinal purposes. So after a lifetime of dealing with food sensitivities, I feel very confident in interpreting my body's response to environmental issues. I am allergic to cedar pollen. The symptom are distinctly different from those of a cold. When I feel bad, I immediately start to question what I have recently ingested. Something like chocolate I will just avoid, but since I like chocolate, I will challenge that rule every few months. (Maybe my body has changed again, to where I can eat chocolate!) Unfortunately, chocolate is still on my avoidance list.

My wife and I grow an organic garden, and can as much produce as possible. We eat out rarely, and only at 'proven' places. As that great philosopher Dirty Harry once said, "A man must know his limitations". As long as I live within my food limitations, I have very minimal food related symptoms, certainly nothing to complain about.

Many people in the EHS and MCS community report taking quantities of vitamins and supplements. I have tried dozens of these over the years, hoping to find the 'magic bullet', but with almost uniformly bad results. My brother, nine years older than me (born in 1930) has been a vitamin and supplement 'junkie' all his life. He gave me a Vitamin C capsule once in my early teen years. I was 'wired' for over 24 hours, like I had consumed large amounts of coffee. I remember trying some of his brewers yeast once, with bad results. I have never met a vitamin or supplement that I could take at the suggested dosage for any length of time. I have developed the habit in recent years of taking only one half of a capsule on any one day. Some years ago a naturopath tested me as needing Burdock. I will take half a capsule one morning, the other half the next morning, and then wait a few days before taking another one. Rarely do I take more than one supplement per day.

The same problem exists with both prescription and non prescription drugs. A doctor once prescribed Prilosec for acid reflux. I got to pill 9 before the side effects made it too unpleasant

to continue. A dentist once prescribed an antibiotic for an infected tooth. Again I got to pill 9 before I had to give up. Some pills do not work from the very first one. Another doctor (we were both in a gluten intolerant support group—He was much worse than I was) prescribed one eighth of the standard prescription for one of my symptoms. That small amount was still excessive for my body. Normal dose aspirin makes my stomach bleed. Tylenol gives me headaches. Children’s dosage ibuprofen still seems to work if I take less than half the normal adult dosage.

Given this dismal track record with drugs, I see no point in having a primary care physician. My last one moved out of state about 1990 and I did not try to find another one. If I need surgery I go directly to a surgeon. If I cut myself, I go to an Urgent Care facility to get stitched up. I am in Medicare, but do not purchase any supplemental insurance. I am confident that any extended stay in a hospital environment will kill me just as surely as any underlying medical condition (cancer, heart, etc.), so I will strenuously resist going to a hospital. I have lived long. I have lived well. My prayer is that when I am not living well any more that I will die quick.

Now we turn to my EHS. About five years before my retirement, my health was declining. I no longer had the strength to walk six blocks to work and still feel good enough to do what was expected of me. I worked in a modern engineering building with fluorescent lighting and lots of computers and other electronic equipment. I had a hunch that my building was killing me. I took early retirement at age 55, partly so I could restrict my exposure to electrical fields. I used only incandescent lights in my home, did not use a cell phone, and made sure that there was no wireless in the house. When I needed to connect multiple computers to a single Internet provider, I used Ethernet cables and a wired router. I think my strategy has been wise. My health is not much worse at age 79 than it was at age 55. At least I can walk a mile by the Arkansas River without fatigue problems. I take no prescription drugs. I have been able to travel. For our 50th wedding anniversary in September, 2010, for example, we flew to Zurich, rented a car, and spent ten days checking out sights and bed and breakfast establishments around Switzerland, with no health problems on my part. My wife and I have been across the Atlantic together a total of ten times, to Hawaii three times, and to every state in the USA.

On two occasions my consulting work required me to spend several hours in the electrical room of the KSU engineering building, after I retired. The 60 Hz magnetic field in that room was often over 100 mg. (One will rarely see over 5 to 10 mg in a home). Both times I was sick for the next day or two, the “coming down with the flu” feeling, without actually having the flu. So I am sure I am intolerant to 60 Hz magnetic field.

Another ‘challenge’ to my body occurred recently. I started a subscription to Netflix so I could watch *Murder She Wrote* reruns streamed over the Internet. I bought a Blu Ray player to interface between the Internet and a second TV, and dug out a router and connected Ethernet cables so both the computer and the TV could be connected at all times. The router had wireless capability, with a switch where it could be disabled. I assumed I had disabled the wireless when the router was used previously, and did not check the switch. It happened

to be 'on' so I spent two weeks in a house with an active wireless router. I spent about four hours per day in the same room with the router.

Within a few days I developed lower back pain, and pain in the knees and hips where they made contact with the mattress while I was sleeping. The pain was severe enough to prevent restful sleep. The pain would disappear during the day while I was away from the house and start back up during the evening while I was in the room with the router. The general feeling of ill health was bad enough that I was starting to think about detailed instructions to my daughter regarding disposal of all my 'stuff' after my death. It finally dawned on me that the wireless might be on. I checked it and turned it off. There was no lower back pain that night nor the following nights!

In my case I do not 'feel' the EM signals. There is a latency period of perhaps 10-15 hours before the ill effects start. My wife and I attended the historic Methodist Church in downtown Ca/ non City for several years when I noticed that I was experiencing EHS symptoms every Sunday night. I measured the fields around the building as being as high as $1600 \mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$, due to a cell tower about one block away. When we switched to another Methodist Church in a neighboring town (with ambient fields less than $10 \mu\text{W}/\text{m}^2$), the Sunday night problem disappeared.

A more delicate matter than physical effects are the mental, psychological, and emotional effects of EM fields. A common complaint is brain fog, where a person feels unable to think clearly. This may be a real effect, more widespread in the population than many realize. My own impression of society in general is that more bad decisions are being made today, per capita, than a half century ago. This includes obesity, drug use, casual sex, debt, etc. I like to think that I have not made any really bad decisions while under the influence of EMFs, but it is still a matter of concern.

Another effect that I have definitely experienced is depression. As mentioned above, I have accepted my limitations, and am living the abundant life within those limitations, so I have nothing to be depressed about. But on rare occasions (none in the last year) I will be depressed for a few hours or a day or so. I know it is just a chemical or electrical transient and try to take a long walk in the sunshine. Fortunately, it has always faded in a relatively short period of time. I feel sorry for those who endure depression for days at a time.

It might be argued that those of us with EHS and/or MCS really do have something to be depressed about. Our medical profession has failed to give us respect. Our government has failed to protect us. Our friends and relatives have failed to understand and support us throughout the development of our illnesses. Some of us have lost jobs. Some even get to the point of living in their car in a national forest. It seems that between the direct effects of chemicals and fields, and the indirect effects of bad treatment by others, all of us with significant EHS or MCS are mentally impaired to some extent. Some of us are paranoid, thinking 'they' are out to get us. Most of us have rituals, where we drink a cup of tea, or take one or more pills, at a certain time of day. Some rituals are not helpful, some even harmful, but we are addicted, either physically or psychologically, to the action. We are fearful of

certain environments, perhaps due to a chance comment made by someone years earlier, who was not particularly knowledgeable about the subject. We read incorrect information on the Internet, and form strong opinions that are quite wrong. We are stuck in an imperfect world. My advice: relax and enjoy it. Be kind to one another. Always allow for the possibility that you might be wrong.