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Travelling with MCS: Essentials for Safe Summer Trips

For individuals living with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), travelling, especially during the busy summer season, can be challenging. Exposure to fragrances, cleaning products, vehicle emissions, and other environmental triggers can quickly turn a vacation into a health hazard. However, with thoughtful planning and the right precautions, safe and enjoyable travel is possible. Here are essential tips and tools to help navigate summer trips while managing MCS.

1. Plan Ahead and Communicate Clearly

Start by selecting destinations that are more likely to accommodate your needs, such as fragrance-free lodgings, nature-based getaways, or eco-conscious scent-free hotels. Contact airlines, restaurants, and other establishments in advance to explain your disability and request fragrance-free accommodations or special arrangements. Clear communication can help minimize unexpected exposures.

2. Choose Safer Modes of Transportation

Travelling by personal vehicle offers more control over your environment, reducing exposure to perfumes, chemical cleaners, air fresheners, laundry products, etc., often found in public transportation. When flying or using public transit, request scent-free seating when possible and consider wearing an appropriate mask to reduce exposure to airborne irritants.

3. Pack a Personal Safety Kit

Your travel kit should include:

- Unscented personal care products
- Fragrance-free laundry detergent or soap
- Organic or hypoallergenic bedding or pillowcases
- Masks or respirators for high-risk environments
- Emergency medications and a list of medical contacts

4. Prepare Safe Food and Water Options

Cross-contamination from cleaning chemicals or perfumed environments can make dining out a risky proposition. Pack safe snacks, research local health food stores, and consider booking accommodations with kitchen access so you can prepare your own meals.

5. Have an Exit Strategy

Always have a backup plan. Whether it's switching hotels, changing restaurants, or leaving a location quickly, being mentally prepared to adjust your plans will reduce stress and keep you safe.

6. Educate Travel Companions

If you're travelling with friends or family, help them understand what MCS is and how they can support you. Ask them to avoid wearing scented products and to assist in monitoring your environment for potential triggers.

Conclusion

Travelling with MCS takes extra effort, but it doesn't mean giving up on summer adventures. By planning carefully, packing smart, and staying aware of your surroundings, you can enjoy new places and experiences while protecting your health. Safe travels!

Resource: Visit our Ecolivingguide, '**Extra Tips for people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)', at** https://lavieecolo.ca/en/sustainable-tourism/