

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 from a viewer below may help you better 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, a 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 weather, air pollution and internal 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 (1) your answers to 10 questions and (2) measuring how fast your eyes react to light. The Sensitometer™ test measures exactly how sensitive you are, and is available at www.Sensitometer.com

Here is an example of someone's Sensitometer™ 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 a combination of the following:

1. Atrovent (**ipratropium**) or AstePro (**azelastine**) – sniffed 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 Dilute Tea** (1/3 cup) – helps prevent sensitive people having a Wet Head.
4. **Darkness** – for 5 minutes at noon (hold hands over the eyes for 5 minutes).
5. **Magnesium Citrate** (200 mg) twice daily for adults – not taken with calcium since calcium may inhibit magnesium absorption. Magnesium relaxes smooth muscles in the bladder, intestines, uterus and lungs and can prevent migraine headaches. Magnesium Facts: <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Magnesium-HealthProfessional/>

I hope this information helps you better understand Hypersensitivity.

Steve Kagen, M.D.
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HYPERSENSITIVITY TEST

1. Are your eyes sensitive to sunlight? YES NO
2. Does the smell of perfume, exhaust or smoke bother you? YES NO
3. Do you have cold hands and cold feet? YES NO
4. Are you very ticklish? YES NO
5. Does cold air make your nose wet and runny? YES NO
6. Do you take really hot showers? YES NO
7. Are you sleepy by the middle of your day? YES NO
8. Have you ever had a migraine headache? YES NO
9. Are you sensitive to caffeine, codeine or alcoholic drinks? YES NO
10. Can you feel when you ovulate? YES NO I DO NOT OVULATE

Test Score	Sensitivity Level	What it Means
0 – 3	Low	You are normal and easily tolerate changes in weather, pollution and hormone levels.
4 – 6	Moderate	Irritants affect you more easily than normal people.
7 – 8	High	You are highly sensitive to changes in weather, odors, sunlight, alcohol, medications and hormone levels.
9 – 10	Very High	You react to anything that changes inside or outside of your body – any change is a big change.

OZONE and ASTHMA

HYPER-SENSITIVITY	RISK FOR ASTHMA SYMPTOMS			
	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
Very High 9 – 10	--	--	0 – 30	≥ 31
High 7 – 8	--	0 – 30	31 – 45	≥ 46
Moderate 4 – 6	0 – 30	31 – 45	46 – 74	≥ 75
Low 0 – 3	0 – 64	65 – 84	85 – 104	≥ 105
SCORE 0 – 10	OZONE LEVEL ppb			

Risks for Asthma Symptoms in Normal People at Ground Level

Risk for Symptoms	Ozone ppb 8-hour average	Description
Low	0 - 64	Not usually harmful.
Moderate	65 - 84	Sensitive people should limit outdoor activities.
High	85 - 104	Asthmatics must limit outdoor activities.
Very High	105 + above	Everyone should avoid outdoor exertion.

Source: <https://www.epa.gov/ozone-pollution-and-your-patients-health>

OZONE AND PARTICULATE MATTER POLLUTION UPPER LIMITS				
RISK for SYMPTOMS	OZONE ppb 8-hour ave	PM 10 ug/m ³ 24-hr ave	PM 2.5 ug/m ³ 24-hr ave	PM 10 – 2.5 ¹ ug/m ³ 24-hr ave
LOW	0 – 59	54	12	42
MODERATE	60 – 75	154	35	119
HIGH	76 – 95	254	55	199
VERY HIGH	> 96	> 354	> 150	> 200

AQI <https://www.epa.gov/ozone-pollution-and-your-patients-health/health-effects-ozone-general-population#response>

1 Particle sizes between PM2.5 and PM10 are associated with increased emergency room visits for asthma attacks.