

Emergency Room Treatment Protocol

- ◆ **TREAT** the patient in a private area with the best ventilation available. Exposure to low-level common volatile organic compounds (VOCs) is likely to cause reactions. Avoid placing patients in areas of renovation with new carpeting or paint or where cleaning agents are in use.
- ◆ **OXYGEN** should immediately be instituted via nasal canula, preferable with Tygon tubing or, if available, the patient's own ceramic oxygen mask with stainless steel tubing. Inhaled oxygen often alleviates symptoms caused by common ambient chemicals, e.g.: cleaning products and disinfectants, fragrance products, computer and equipment fumes, plastic materials, etc.
- ◆ **FRAGRANCE FREE STAFF** should be the only staff to treat the patient. The staff should not be wearing perfume/cologne, scented hair gels or body care products or clothing with scented detergent or dryer sheets residues. Chemical fragrances are respiratory irritants and induce other symptoms.
- ◆ **SYMPTOMS** of chemical hypersensitivity present in multiple body systems, e.g. respiratory, gastrointestinal or neurological. They may include inflammation of airways, headache, pain, heart palpitations/tachycardia, mental confusion, word finding problems, ataxia, anxiety and changes in behavior.
- ◆ **HISTORY** Have the patient (if possible) describe his/her usual exposure symptoms; assume the patient will experience these symptoms in the chemically dense hospital environment. Obtain a full history of adverse reactions to medications and foods as these patients at times can have acute reactions to common chemicals. Be aware that patients with chemical hypersensitivity are likely to have other complicating conditions: latex allergy, mold allergy, CFIDS, FMS, chronic pain, etc.
- ◆ **MEDICATION** Chemically sensitive patients may respond to lower levels of medication or not tolerate medications well. Medications used should be preservative-free. Use IV medications in glass bottles whenever possible. Avoid the use of petroleum-based ointments or creams.
- ◆ **LISTEN** to the patient's concerns and do not discredit his/her symptoms. Staff unfamiliar with chemical hypersensitivity may not realize the degree of debilitation and complications that can result when the patient is exposed to common substances that staff may consider benign.
- ◆ **CONTACT** the patient's physician and family as soon as possible for further treatment details.

Reverse side: Personal emergency contact names and telephone numbers