



IS IT MCAS OR IS IT ALL IN YOUR HEAD?

“I’m allergic to everything!”

“I feel awful in general!”

“My doctor says it’s all in my head.”

“I have hives, but I have no idea why.”

“I have period migraines.”

Do any of these complaints sound familiar to you? If so, you need to learn about **Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS)**, a complex, increasingly common, and often undiagnosed collection of symptoms.

It is estimated that roughly 17% of the population and 35% of obese patients suffer from MCAS. Symptoms of MCAS usually appear in childhood but extend well into adulthood, unfortunately remaining

undiagnosed in most patients. These symptoms, which often wax and wane, can affect multiple areas of the body. In fact, no system is immune to MCAS, including the immune system.

Patients with MCAS tend to be sensitive to foods, supplements, and/or medications. They are the “canaries in the coal mine,” the first to detect mold in a building, the first to react to environmental allergens and pollutants, and the first to break out in hives. They often claim to “feel awful in general,” even though their lab tests and scans frequently show them to be the “absolute picture of health.” This leads to confusion and frustration for patients and providers alike.

MCAS may be the most highly complex multisystem condition we are facing today, yet most healthcare professionals have not been trained to recognize, diagnose, or even treat it effectively. When doctors are unfamiliar with MCAS, they may label very real symptoms as “imaginary” or “all in your head.”

What Activates Mast Cells?

- Everything we breathe
- Everything we swallow
- Everything that touches our skin
- Neurotransmitters
- Stress and stressors
- Hormones
- Injuries/trauma
- Medications and supplements
- Invisible energy and vibrations (i.e., EMF, WiFi)
- Pathogens
- Mold and mycotoxins
- Antigens (i.e., mold-allergy)



What Are Mast Cells?

To begin peeling back the layers of MCAS, we must first understand what mast cells are and how they function.

Mast cells are a type of innate immune white blood cell present in nearly every tissue in the body. Abundant in the organs which function as a first line of defense, including the GI tract, skin, lungs, and nose, mast cells play an important role in mounting appropriate allergic reactions, protecting us from infection, and maintaining blood-brain barrier function. They are also found in the eyes, ears, lymphatic vessels, nervous system, and bones, which explains the diversity of problems linked with MCAS.

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Physicians Preference Pharmacy standards are more stringent than those of the United States Pharmacopeia (USP). In addition to onsite weight testing, we send multiple samples per week to an outside laboratory for potency testing. Physicians Preference Pharmacy ranks first in Houston for the number of samples sent for potency testing and in the top 8% of pharmacies nationwide.

Physicians Preference Pharmacy is a Houston-based, PCAB-accredited compounding pharmacy serving physicians and patients since 2001. We are licensed to work with doctors and ship to patients in 48 states (excludes NV, AL).

There are over 200 different types of mast cell receptors, including histamine, cytokine, toll-like, corticotropin releasing factor, and hormone receptors, to name a few. When mast cells are overresponsive to triggers, all other systems fall in line with haywire overactivation. The mast cell's primary goal is to keep the body safe, and when any threat is posed to the body, mast cells react.

Mast cells are necessary for appropriate immune responses, but when chronically overactivated, every system in the body goes haywire. This is the essence of MCAS.

What Are Common Symptoms of MCAS?

One reason MCAS is difficult to pin down is because it affects so many organs and tissues in the body. Symptoms often show up in areas of first-line defense, where mast cells are particularly dense. Some of the most common symptoms include:

- Temperature abnormalities, cold most of the time or low-grade fever
- Fatigue/malaise, unable to get out of bed, often waxes/wanes
- Unprovoked sweats, most often at night and especially on the back
- Hot flashes
- Impaired healing ability
- Decreased appetite and early satiety
- Brain fog
- Fluctuations in blood pressure
- Dizziness leading to loss of consciousness
- Dramatic and abrupt weight losses/gains
- Itchy skin affecting different areas

Unfortunately, this list barely scratches the surface. MCAS-related problems also include a variety of skin problems, vision and hearing disorders, environmental allergies, respiratory conditions, frequent infections, lymph node enlargement, hematologic (blood) disorders, weakness, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and more.

7 COMMON ROOT CAUSES OF MCAS



There is also a strong link between MCAS and histamine intolerance, which may result in unexplained hives or congestion, migraines, heart racing following meals, insomnia, and panic attacks. Histamine is regularly released from mast cells to participate in the inflammatory process, blood vessel dilation, digestion, and as a chemical messenger to the brain. Conditions perpetuating histamine intolerance include gluten sensitivity, estrogen dominance, leaky gut, gut infections, IBD, mold sensitivity/exposure, and EMF sensitivity. However, MCAS is the number one driver of histamine intolerance.

How Is MCAS Treated?

The goal in the treatment of MCAS is the elimination of triggers, calming of mast cells and symptom resolution. Supporting the immune system, gentle detoxification, hormone balance and combating biotoxin illness are equally important.

Treatment includes lifestyle changes, starting with identifying individual triggers such as foods, stressors, mold, infections, etc. For example, if histamine sensitivity is an issue, as it often is, it is important to avoid high-histamine foods and beverages like red wine, avocados, spinach, pickled foods, leftovers, and foods cooked in a Crockpot.

Targeted medications are also useful in the treatment of MCAS. They include compounds to help

stabilize mast cells, suppress the adverse effects of excessive histamine, support detoxification pathways, reduce inflammation, balance hormones, and relieve symptoms.

Because allergies and sensitivities are common in patients with this condition, it is important to use medications that are free of bothersome inactive ingredients such as dyes, artificial colors and flavors, and additives. Physicians Preference Pharmacy offers a number of compounded medications that have proven helpful for our MCAS patients.

Hope for MCAS

Patients with MCAS must understand that mast cells are not the bad guys, but these cells must be tamed to function normally. With appropriate lifestyle changes, an intentional treatment regimen, and encouragement for healing, symptoms of MCAS are expected to improve over time.

At Physicians Preference Pharmacy, we are here to support you and your healthcare providers by providing pure compounded medications and information about MCAS. Call the pharmacy to speak with any pharmacist about MCAS today!

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