

11/15/07 WHY DRY AIR DEPLETES US

When we expose our bare heads to the sun on a hot, dry day, they immediately heat up, start sweating, we squint our eyes, and our nasal passages shrink. That presses on our sinuses, and the dry air takes the mucus along. Our O₂ intake and H₂O supply decrease, so fatigue sets in. This happens to most people after 15-20 minutes in the sun and dry air (e.g., in traffic, walking, working, waiting for buses, etc.).

It seems like everyone I see during these dry days feels sick, and we don't need to "fall victim to 'the weather!'" Weather systems "like to travel," like we do; and we don't have to go to Oregon or Nevada, because their weather comes to visit us. Wear layered clothing: otherwise you'll feel sweaty or chilled, and hats can be our friends during either cold or heat.

If you feel headache-y and have fatigue and respiratory problems, try sticking to the shade, drinking at least a gallon of water a day, have tea and less coffee, breathe in steam, wash your face often to breathe in moisture and equalize pressure in your head (blowing your nose gently), and put your feet up to stimulate re-circulation into your head. Sometimes the symptoms will go away by "drowning" them on the inside.

Following these tips will make our holidays more fun.

Some people are energized by the feeling of this fall dry weather, but if they were in the sun for a half hour working, they'd change their minds. The shade is where it feels "fresh."

If people around you are too annoying with their cheerfulness, send them on errands in sunny traffic, and then you can be the one to cheer them up when they come back depleted. (It "equalizes the pressure.")

Cheers,
Dr. Renfrew
(not M.D.)