

## Perfume In The Workplace

Perfume can affect a person's ability to work. If a co-worker or friend tells you that your perfume is making them ill, believe them and do not take offence. The reaction is not to you, personally, but to one or more of the hundreds of chemicals that are present in the perfume.

Whether your perfume is expensive or inexpensive, the chemicals it contains may cause health problems for other people.

### Steps to creating a scent-free workplace:

- ◆ Discuss the benefits of having a scent-free workplace with other workers.
- ◆ Develop a workplace policy on the use of scent-free products.
- ◆ Emphasize that a scent-free policy is a health and safety issue for the workplace.
- ◆ Display signs that welcome people to your scent-free workplace.

## What You Can Do

A simple step to take is don't wear perfume, cologne, or aftershave when going out to public places. Your consideration of those sensitive people around, you will be greatly appreciated!

### Effects Of Scented Products

#### The Facts:

Scented products can make asthma, allergies and hay fever worse (15 - 25% of the population are affected).

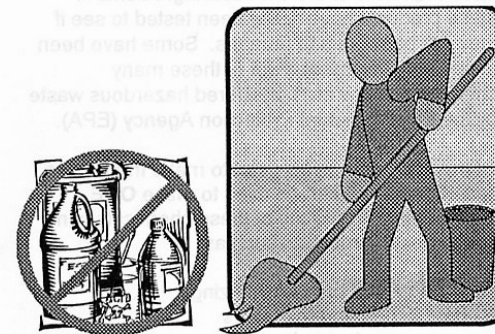
Scented products can trigger migraines (17% of Canadians suffer from migraines).

#### Scented products can cause:

- \* sore throats
- \* runny nose
- \* sinus congestion
- \* wheezing
- \* shortness of breath
- \* headache
- \* dizziness
- \* inability to concentrate
- \* fatigue
- \* mental confusion
- \* anger
- \* irritability
- \* seizures
- \* nausea
- \* muscle pain
- \* anxiety

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# No Scents Makes Sense



*Taking the Scents out of  
Sensitive!*

**When You Can't Breathe,  
Nothing Else Matters**

## Facts About Scents

In Canada, 15 - 20% of the population have some kind of breathing problem, such as asthma. Asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and allergies can all be adversely affected by the chemicals found in scented products. Scents, perfumes, and fragrances are being found in an ever-widening variety of products, including personal care products, cosmetics, household cleaners, drugs, and even foods.

More than 80% of the chemical ingredients in these products have never been tested to see if they are poisonous to humans. Some have been tested only minimally. Out of these many chemicals, a few are considered hazardous waste by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Of the 4000 chemicals used to make fragrances, several hundred can be used to make **ONE** scented product. Many of these chemicals can cause health problems such as:

- ◆ shortness of breath/wheezing
- ◆ headaches and migraines
- ◆ nausea and muscle pain
- ◆ cold-like symptoms

just to mention a few.

## Perfume Or Poison

The research branch of the National Academy of Sciences estimates that "15% of the population experiences hypersensitivity to chemicals." Hypersensitivity is an overreaction by the body to something in its surroundings.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of people who get sick when exposed to fragrances. Babies and children are more at risk, as are people trying to recover from illness.

There are two main ways in which perfumes and their chemicals can enter the body. One route is through direct contact with skin and the other is by breathing it in.

Imagine being someone with a body primed for problems, such as a person who suffers from asthma, allergies or from MCS (Multiple Chemical Sensitivities). For these people, their bodies react to one or more of the chemicals causing health problems.

The reaction may be as minor as irritated eyes to as severe as *anaphylaxis*. Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can lead to sudden death.

In one study, 72% of people with asthma had negative reactions to perfumes - their breathing tests dropped to half the normal rate.

## Getting Free Of Perfumes, Scents and Fragrances

When choosing scent-free or fragrance-free products, it is important to be an informed consumer. A product that is "fragrance-free" is likely to be totally odorless. A product labelled "scent-free" could mean that no scent has been added to the chemicals already used to make it.

Presently the cosmetic industry uses the terms "fragrance-free" and "unscented" virtually without restriction. Look at the label. If the word "fragrance" or "flavour" is in the list of ingredients, it is **NOT** fragrance free.

Don't be afraid to use your nose! Or ask the store clerk to check it for you.

