



FRAGRANCES



WHERE ARE FRAGRANCES FOUND AND WHAT ARE THE DANGERS?

The word “fragrance” covers dozens, sometimes even hundreds, of chemicals on product labels. Many common household products and personal care items contain fragrances. Examples include cleaners, air fresheners, scented detergents, hand lotions, candles, incense, and felt-tip art markers.

Children are exposed to fragrance chemicals primarily through the inhalation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that readily evaporate from the scented product into the air or direct skin contact.

Synthetic chemicals in fragrances are petroleum-based and can be harmful to human health. Chemicals found in fragrances include phthalates, which are endocrine disruptors, and carcinogens benzophenone and styrene. In addition, some children and adults have allergic reactions to fragrance chemicals. Asthmatic children are at especially high risk.



IS "UNSCENTED" THE SAME AS "FRAGRANCE-FREE"?

A “fragrance-free” label indicates that the product contains no added fragrance chemicals. An “unscented” label means that fragrance chemicals may have been added to mask odors. Be sure to select products labeled as “fragrance-free.”

ARE SCENTED CANDLES & ESSENTIAL OILS OK TO USE?

Scented candles are popular gifts but harmful fragrance chemicals that are added to them can be released into the air and inhaled by children. In addition, fragrance oils can soften the wax so that the candle does not burn cleanly--emitting more black soot. Black soot damages homes and furnishings and is harmful to human health.

Essential oils are used in many cleaning and personal care products. They are often advertised as "green" or "all-natural". However, even though they are derived from plants, they are not necessarily safer. The chemical compounds found in essential oils are highly concentrated and can be harmful to human health, causing skin irritations, respiratory distress, and even cancer.



HOW CAN I MINIMIZE MY USE OF FRAGRANCES?

- Know your labels: scented vs. "unscented." Unscented products may still contain fragrance chemicals. Choose "fragrance-free" products.
- Avoid products that contain "fragrance" or "parfum" on the label.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when working with fragranced products, such as personal care products, cleaning products, perfumes, and home care products.
- Clean does not have a smell. Choose third party certified green cleaning products to lower harmful chemical exposures: [Environmental Protection Agency's "Safer Choice" label](#), [Green Seal](#), or [ECOLOGO](#).
- Deodorizing a room is possible just by opening a window or placing an open box of baking soda or a small bowl of vinegar somewhere in the room- out of the reach of children.
- Keep trash sealed at all times and take it outside frequently.



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