



# I SMELL GOOD. BUT AT WHAT COST?



Perfume and other scented cosmetic products may contain harmful toxins.

## What's up with perfume?

Perfume and other scented cosmetics are popular worldwide. We use these products for pleasant smells, but they may be doing more harm than good.

There are harmful contaminants in many of our beloved perfumes, aromatic cosmetics and cleaning products. [1] Continuous use of these products may result in severe consequences to our health and society. [2]



## Toxicity in perfumed products

The chemicals in perfume are being inhaled, absorbed by our skin and hair, as well as lingering all over our homes.

These are some of the over **3,500 chemicals present** [3] in aromatic products:

- Volatile aromatic compounds (VOCs) → Rapidly absorbed air pollutants [4, 5]
- Phthalates [1] → Endocrine disrupting chemicals [6]
- Parabens [1] → Artificial preservatives and hormone disrupting chemicals [7]
- Terpenes [1] → Chemicals with potential high cytotoxicity [8]
- Benzophenone [1] → Additive in cosmetics, linked to reproductive concerns [9]
- Triclosan [1] → Antibacterial chemical, also an endocrine disruptor [10]

## The effects of toxins in fragrance

### Health

- Dermal irritation [1]
- Respiratory concerns [1]
- Migraines and headaches [1]
- Cancer: breast, prostate [1]
- Gastrointestinal issues: nausea, diarrhea [1]
- Impacted immune system: lymph nodes, thyroid, fatigue, fever [1]
- Reproductive and sexual health: suppressed fertility and hormone disruption [11]



### Environmental

- VOCs play a role in the development of air pollution [12]
- Scented cleaning products end up in waterways, wastewater treatment does not remove fragrance toxins [12]
- Packaging in single-use plastic is a significant source of waste [13]
- Unethical sourcing of raw materials for fragrance [14]

### Social

Fragrance toxicity impacts society through manufacturers who are more interested in **monetary gain** than **consumer safety**. [15]

- Precautionary consumption unfairly blames the consumer, the industry is allowing toxic products to reach the market. [15]
- The current regulatory and manufacturing practices target the vulnerable and exacerbates environmental injustice. [15]
- Accessibility to "clean" products is limited and isolating to those who cannot afford it. [15]



## What's next?



### Opt out

One of the many options to avoid fragrance toxicity is to opt out of aromatic products completely. Skip on perfume and utilize unscented cosmetics and cleaning supplies.



### "Clean" alternatives

The fragrance market had adapted to include non-toxic, "clean" alternatives to scented products. There may be less options but you won't have to opt out completely.



### Stay informed

Make informed decisions regarding fragrance. Stay aware of ingredients and shop responsibly, at your comfort level.

## Take action:



### Spread Awareness

Talk to the people around you about the harmful effects of fragrance, on health, the environment and society. Let them know about their options to make changes.

### Call out regulatory bodies

If we want to keep toxic products off the market we must keep regulatory bodies accountable. Government officials must be pushed to create laws and regulations that protect consumers from toxic chemicals.

Organizations such as "Toxic-Free Future" have programs in place to contact elected officials about environmental concerns. [17]

## What to look for:



### Labels

Brands that are mindful of their ingredients and strive to create safer products will many times have labels or certifications. Here are some to look out for [16]:

- **EWG Verified:** Products that meet the Environmental Working Group's health and safety standards. [16]



- **Made Safe:** Non-profit certification program, created a non-toxic seal for safe to use products. [16]



- **USDA Certified:** Label ensures that the product contains a safe amount of renewable biological ingredients.



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