

Idaho Naturopathic Medicine

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To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in regard to use of fragrance, whether in perfume, air fresheners, cosmetics, scented diffusers, cleaning products, candles, or any other scented product.

Fragrance is not one compound; numerous products have been shown to contain over 30 chemicals. The Food Drug and Cosmetics Act of 1938 excluded fragrance from regulation due to perfume industry propriety formula concerns. The fragrance industry continues to be free from regulation, much to the detriment of people choosing freely or inadvertently exposed to fragrances.

Many fragrance compounds have not been tested for safety, other chemicals are known carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, neurological disrupters, and allergens. Unfortunately, many fragrance users are ignorant to the detrimental health effects of the products they use. Unfortunately, consumers are unable to determine fragrance ingredients.

While not all people are overtly affected by fragrance, enough people suffer from fragrance-related illnesses to warrant a serious examination of fragrance-free policies in the home *and* in the work place. Health affects can range from migraines, skin disturbances, shortness of breath, and more seriously, reproductive changes.

One of the issues of using fragrance is that although it is a personal choice to use perfume, it is unlike any other personal care choice. Perfume affects everyone who encounters it; regardless of if they choose to use fragrances or not. Because of this, the use of fragrance is much like the use of cigarettes; it negatively affects everyone in the same immediate area. The further problem is that once applied, fragrance is perceived until washed off. This is unlike some tobacco users who may exit the building to smoke and then return to a workspace. Even if the odor seems lost to the wearer, the product remains. (It is due to desensitization of smell receptors that we lose the ability to 'smell' something in a few minutes or hours.)

Habitual fragrance users may indicate fragrance products do not negatively affect them. Keep in mind, however, that chemicals applied to the skin are more toxic than if ingested. This is due to lack of 'first pass metabolism' by the liver. Secondly, the effects may not be immediate, but may affect developing fetuses, contribute to brain fog, immune regulation, or DNA damage. Alternatively, users may not attribute chronic conditions such as rhinitis, sinusitis, headaches, dermatitis, fatigue, infertility, or brain fog to their fragrance exposure.

Providing a healthy, non-toxic work environment makes sense. Although chemically sensitive individuals are a minority, creating a fragrance-free policy in the work place may reduce health care costs for the entire work force.

Respectfully,
Sara Rodgers, NMD