



## The Hidden Health Dangers Of Fragrance

### Message from Milly

Autumn greetings!

This month's newsletter is all about one of the worst toxins lurking in almost everyone's home. I'm talking about synthetic fragrances.

Now, if this sounds like an exaggeration I can assure you, it's not.

A little-known fact about fragrances is that just one "fragrance", in a bottle of laundry detergent, for example, can contain dozens or even hundreds of untested and harmful chemicals.

What types of chemicals?

Phthalates is a big one. These Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs) cross the placental barrier and have been linked to endocrine and organ dysfunction.[1]

They are such cause for concern that they are heavily restricted and regulated in other countries, yet they're freely added to thousands household and personal care items. They're also added to plastics to enhance flexibility.

We'll talk more about phthalates and fragrance chemicals coming up, especially their impacts on children. We'll also cover how to detoxify your home from fragrance, and what types of fragrance-free brands you can trust.

I'll finish this intro with one important point.

Fragrances can impart a strong emotional response in humans. The makers of fragrances know this, which is why they formulate them the way they do.

However, I implore you to consider letting go of your cherished synthetic fragrances for the



sake of your health for just a few weeks.

What you'll find is, just like giving up MSG and processed food, once you go without fragrance, you'll find it strong and even offensive if you try using it again.

So give it a try for at least 3-4 weeks. Your body will thank you!

Blessings to all,

-Milly

Reference:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8157593/>



## Why Fragrance Chemicals Are So Dangerous (especially to children)

We touched on the issue of chemicals in fragrance in the introduction. Here, we'll do a deeper dive into why fragrance chemicals are so harmful.

### Did you know...

- Fragrances are considered one of the top 5 known allergens?[i]
- Up to 95% of synthetic chemicals used to make fragrance are derived from petroleum?[ii]
- That just one "fragrance" can contain dozens or even hundreds of these chemicals? This means, companies can nestle all these hidden chemicals under the label "fragrance" ...so you never know what you're getting.
- That there are over 3000 chemicals that can be used to formulate a fragrance?[iii]
- These chemicals, including phthalates, octoxynols and nonoxynols, styrene, SVOCs, PFASs, propyl paraben, methylene chloride, and formaldehyde and formaldehyde-emitting substances have been linked to: [1], [iv], [v]
  - Asthma
  - Respiratory ailments
  - Diabetes
  - Endocrine disruption (which creates a cascade of hormonal issues ranging from breast and male/female reproductive health

- issues)[vi]
- Headaches and migraines
- Abnormal development of the reproductive systems of baby boys (phthalates...horrific!)
- ADHD and autism due to prenatal exposure
- Behavioral issues in children
- And cancer to name but a few.
- Styrene is just one fragrance chemical that is considered a human carcinogen.[vii]
- The FDA has no power to insist fragrance chemicals be disclosed on labels?
- That signature fragrances used in laundry products, for example, are designed to impregnate fabrics. This creates a constant release of toxic chemicals as you wear the clothes, sleep on your sheets, etc. It also makes it difficult (but not impossible) to remove these scents.
- That even all-natural, non-toxic, eco-friendly, plant-based, or organic personal care and household products can contain fragrance? Sometimes fragrance is combined with essential oils so the product appears more “natural”.
- And that unscented products can contain fragrance that’s been masked using fragrance masking/dissipating chemicals?[viii]

I could go on for hundreds of pages citing hundreds of studies on all these harmful chemicals. But we only have one newsletter, and hopefully, this proves the point!

So, I’ll offer a few additional resources if you’d like to go into more depth:

- [The Environmental Working Group](#) has dozens of articles on fragrance chemicals and action being taken for greater transparency in the industry.
- [Campaign for Safe Cosmetics has an extensive article here](#)
- [Dr. Axe has a great article on Fragrance you can find here](#)
- [The Branch Basics team](#) does an excellent job explaining the pitfall of fragrance and how to eliminate it from your home.

## References:

- [i] <https://www.ewg.org/research/scented-secrets>
- [ii] <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015043251746&view=1up&seq=3>
- [iii] <https://ifragrance.org/priorities/sustainability#.WCdfWRlrJmB>
- [iv] <https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/phthalates-phthalates-everywhere>
- [v] <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/children-chemicals-fragrances-cosmetics-phthalate-attention-deficit-womb/>
- [vi] <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp.113-a670>
- [vii] <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/18725/review-of-the-styrene-assessment-in-the-national-toxicology-program-12th-report-on-carcinogens>
- [viii] <https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/news/ask-ewg-what-fragrance>

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## How To Identify Fragrances At Home

If your mind is now racing with all the places fragrance is hiding in your home, relax. This section will give you a checklist to identify where fragrances may be hiding plus tips on how to start detoxifying your home.

Yes, this is a long list! However, if you start with one room at a time it will be very manageable.

Where fragrances are hiding at home, room-by-room:

- **The laundry room:** detergents, dryer sheets, fabric softeners, bleach, boosters, stain removers, Febreze or other odor neutralizers.
- **The kitchen:** dish detergents, plug-ins, scented paper towels, potpourri, hand soap, hand sanitizers, diffusers, countertop cleaner, oven cleaner, and other cleaners.
- **Living spaces:** air fresheners, scented candles, plug-ins, diffusers, antibacterial wipes, hand sanitizers, scented facial tissues, potpourri, incense, Febreze or other odor neutralizers, scented pet products.
- **Bathroom:** personal care products (cleansers, creams, lotions, serums, oils, nail polish), hair care products, soaps and body washes, bathroom cleaners, drain cleaner, baby wipes, baby products, scented toilet paper, scented facial tissue, bubble bath, scented facial wipes, potpourri, plug-ins, air fresheners, scented candles, (funny enough,



Poouri products---like Poo-Ouri, are safe as they are made with 100% essential oil based).

- **Bedrooms:** scented candles, air fresheners, plug-ins/diffusers, Febreze or other odor neutralizers, potpourri sachets for dressers, outgassing from clothes washed in fragranced detergents.
- **The car:** air fresheners, Febreze or other odor neutralizers, diffusers, scented car wipes and other cleaning products.
- **The nursery/baby's room:** scented baby wipes, baby oil, air fresheners, outgassing from sheets/clothing washed in fragranced detergent, scented diapers, other scented baby care products (diaper creams, etc.).
- **The playroom:** everything in living spaces plus scented markers, pencils, toys, bubbles, paints, scratch-and-sniff stickers, etc.

Okay, now you have your fragrance-hit-list, let's get into what to replace these items with as you're able.

In the meantime, steps like opening windows every day and using a high-quality air purifier can help negate some of those fragrance chemicals.



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*All the links to products are provided for educational purposes and are not affiliate links.*

## The Best Non-Toxic Fragrance-Free Swaps

**Laundry:** Ecos Fragrance-Free Detergent ([a deal at Costco.com](#)) or [Branch Basics](#), which works as a detergent, stain remover, booster ([Oxygen Boost](#)), etc. Babyganics and Seventh Generation aren't bad either.

**Household cleaners:** [Branch Basics](#) is awesome because it's one all-natural, unscented, non-toxic concentrate designed to be diluted at different strengths to replace every cleaning and laundry product in your house. You can even use it for hand soap, washing dishes, removing makeup, bathing your baby or pet, washing your car, cleaning carpets, etc.

[EWG-verified cleaning products](#) are also excellent choices. You can also use their database to look up your favorite brands and see their safety score; make sure they're unscented!

And, of course, you can look up all-natural DIY cleaning recipes using things like castile soap, distilled white vinegar, peroxide, baking soda, essential oils, etc.

**Skin Care:** Use [EWG's SkinDeep Database](#) to Search Your Favorite Brands. This article is also

helpful.

**Hair Care:** This is important as over 95% of haircare products contain fragrance...even the more natural ones. Again, use [EWG's database](#) to check your favorite brand and search for brands.

**Trash Bags:** Choose unscented.

**Plug-ins:** You can buy [essential oil plug-in diffusers](#) to use with 100% pure essential oils. Air Fresheners: Nothing beats 100% pure essential oils for infusing your home with pleasant and therapeutic aromas. You can also [DIY your own non-toxic air freshener](#).

Again, the Pouri company is a good source of safe and non-toxic pre-made air fresheners.

**Dish Soap:** Choose unscented 100% natural dish soaps or those scented exclusively with essential oils. Read those labels carefully, though. For example, Trader Joe's Lavender Dish Soap contains no synthetic fragrance, BUT their Citrus version does. You can also DIY a dish soap using liquid castile soap. Here's a good recipe.

**Deodorizers:** Plain old vodka in a spray bottle works great to deodorize the air, fabrics, carpets, etc. Baking soda is also an excellent natural deodorizer for shoes, drains, garbage cans, etc.

**Aromatherapy/Essential Oils:** Look for 100% pure essential oils with no synthetic fragrance or other fillers. Young Living and DoTerra are great. I also like [Rocky Mountain Oils](#) as a more affordable non-MLM option.

**Feminine Care:** Buy only unscented, plastic-free (because phthalates are in plastics) pads and tampons. [Lola](#), [TOM Organic](#), and [NatraCare](#) are all excellent options. Silicone or latex/rubber menstrual cups and reusable pads are also great choices.

At this time, I'm leery of recommending period underwear due to the controversy surrounding PFASs (toxic "forever chemicals" related to Teflon that wick moisture) in specific brands.

However, [this article from Mamavation](#) is an excellent resource for learning about the toxicity levels of different brands (Thinx is the big brand in question).

Moms, grandmas, etc., especially should read this and decide what may be best for their daughter (because period panties can make menstruation a lot easier on our young girls!).

Perfume: look for essential-oil-based perfumes rated lowest on EWGs toxicity scale, [like Just The Goods](#) or [Sally B's Skin Yummies Essentially Perfume](#).

Candles: 100% beeswax or soy-based candles scented with only pure essential oils. [Check out this guide](#) for more info and brand recommendations.

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