

Information about Chemical Sensitivity

What It Is and What You Can Do to Help Provide a Fragrance-Free Environment for Employees and Customers

Over 40 million people in the U.S. are sensitive to everyday chemicals, including petroleum products, commercial and household cleaning supplies, laundry detergents, and toiletries containing fragrances. (By comparison, there are 17 million diabetics in the United States.)

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, or MCS, is not an allergy or asthma and it is not treatable with drugs. It is crucial for persons with chemical sensitivities to avoid exposure to substances and fragrances that are toxic to their health.

Exposure to products containing even small amounts of chemicals can cause involuntary reactions triggered in the brain, endocrine, and immune systems that may begin immediately and not subside for hours. Avoiding contact with scents is not a matter of preference--it is a serious health issue.

Chemicals can cause symptoms including migraines; breathing difficulty; irritation to eyes, throat and skin; nausea; incoordination; confusion; heart palpitations; dizziness; tremors; blurred vision; and slurred speech.

Many of our employees and customers/clients are careful about maintaining and improving their health by avoiding toxic products. If chemically based products and scents are present, the health of shoppers and employees is undermined.

Thank you for helping to keep your workplace safe for everyone.

For more information on MCS:

* Environmental Health Network of California in Larkspur 415-541-5075
www.ehnca.org

* Fragranced Products Information Network
www.ameliaww.com/fpin/fpin.htm

* Melissa Kaplan's Chronic Neuroimmune Diseases: MCS
www.anapsid.org/cnd/mcs

Chemically-based products and scents to avoid

On days you are at work, please refrain from using or wearing any of the following products. Their lingering scents can permeate the user's clothing, hair, and skin:

- * scented deodorant or antiperspirant
- * scented lotion, sunscreen or tanning cream for face, hands, or body (many lotions, especially sunscreens, have fragrance even when not labeled as being scented)
- * aftershave or richly scented shaving lotion
- * fragranced bar or liquid soaps, including Dove, Ivory, Dial, SoftSoap
- * commercially fragranced shampoo or conditioner, hair spray, gel, mousse or other leave-in hair products
- * essential oils
- * any perfume, cologne or fragrance
- * aromatherapy products

- * laundry detergent with phosphates, chlorine bleach, and/or added scent (e.g., Tide, Surf, Cheer)
- * scented fabric softener sheets (for example, Bounce) or liquid fabric softener
- * recently dry cleaned items (remove plastic wrapping and air outdoors before use)
- * cigarette, incense (unlit or burned), or other smoke
- * air freshener sprays or solids, potpourri, scented candles

Note that a scented commercial laundry detergent may leave its smell in fabric even after a few washings with a biodegradable alternative. It can take a while for clothing to neutralize from buildup of fragranced products. Airing out your clothing can help reduce residual odors. Before getting dressed, hang your outfit outdoors, or put it into the clothes dryer *without* a dryer sheet on the cool air setting for 10 minutes.

If your hair has been colored, permed, and/or applied with gel or spray, be sure it is dry while at work (not still wet from washing or re-wetted).

Before leaving home for work, sniff-test (or ask someone to sniff) your hair and outfit for residues of toiletries, laundry products, or other odors that could have been absorbed, for example from nearby clothing in your closet, a scented store, hair or nail salon, or smoky setting.

While a request to be scent-free may seem intimidating to accommodate, your best bet is to avoid personal care products with petrochemical ingredients and/or obvious smell, such as essential oils.

Many products on supermarket and drugstore shelves labeled as "unscented" are not scent-free. They often contain "masking" fragrances to supposedly unscent odors from manufacturing. But they are not safe to chemically scented persons. Instead, look for products marked as scent-free or fragrance-free found at natural food stores.

Recommended personal care products

The following products are safe to use and environmentally friendly, available at natural food stores (many are sold at Community Market in bulk, bottle, or bar), Trader Joe's, and some supermarkets. While some of these products have a slight scent, they don't contain toxic ingredients, and they leave no residual odor on skin, hair or fabric after used as directed.

Deodorant:

- * The Deodorant Stone with no aluminum chlorhydrate
- * Tom's of Maine Unscented roll-on
- * Nature's Gate Winter Clean unscented deodorant roll-on
- * Baking soda and cornstarch (pat onto clean damp skin)

Shampoo and Conditioner:

- * Pure Essentials Fragrance-free
- * Stonybrook Botanicals Unscented
- * KMS Fragrance-Free formulas
- * Granny's Old Fashioned Unscented
- * Avalon Organic Botanicals
- * Nature's Gate Organics

Hair Gel: look for alcohol free, no added scent formulas

- * KMS Puritives fragrance free, alcohol free non-aerosol hairspray
- * Aloe Vera 80
- * Organic Essence
- * KY Jelly (without nonoxynol)

Hand or Body Soap:

- * Dr. Bronner's castile soap in liquid or bar
- * Pure & Natural Unscented Glycerine bar soap
- * Tom's of Maine Unscented Natural Moisturizing bar soap
- * Avalon Organic Lavender Glycerin soap

Body/Moisturizing Lotion:

- * Nature's Gate Fragrance-Free Moisturizing Lotion
- * Trader Joe's Unscented Moisturizing Lotion or Cream
- * Alba Botanical Very Emollient Unscented Body Lotion
- * Home Health Almond Glow Skin Lotion
- * Any fragrance-free hemp oil

Sunscreen:

- * Nature's Gate Fragrance-Free Sport Block Lotion
- * All Terrain performance sunblock TerraSport

Shaving Cream:

- * Aveeno Therapeutic Shave Gel, No Added Fragrance
- * Kiss My Face
- * lather from a bar soap on safe list

Lipstick (can also be used as blusher)

- * Hemp Organics
- * Ecco Bella
- * Kiss My Face

Laundry: seek biodegradable, phosphate- and chlorine-free formulas

- * Bi-O-Kleen All Temperature Laundry liquid or powder
- * LifeTree Eco-Friendly Laundry Liquid
- * Dr. Bronner's liquid castile soap (all kinds)
- * Natural Value Fragrance & Dye Free Laundry Detergent
- * Granny's Old Fashioned Power Plus Unscented Laundry Liquid Concentrate
- * Trader Joe's "...Next to Godliness Environmentally Sound Concentrated Laundry Detergent" in liquid or powder
- * All Free Clear

Laundry stain removal: enzyme based products are effective

- * Bi-O-Kleen Bac-Out Stain & Odor Eliminator
- * Pure Ayre Odor Eliminator pet, fabric and air freshener

This document is available online at www.anapsid.org/cnd/mcs/fragfree.html