



Women's
College
Hospital



Women's College Hospital has a Fragrance Free Policy!

Women's College Hospital is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. We ask that staff, physicians, volunteers, students, faculty, patients, residents, and visitors refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes, and other scented personal care products, within Women's College Hospital buildings.

1. What is a fragrance?

- Fragrances are mixtures of often hundreds of different chemicals designed to have a particular scent.
- Most of the chemicals in fragrances are volatile, meaning that they remain in the air for a long time.
- The materials used to make fragrances may be man-made, natural, or both. However, most modern fragrances contain mainly petroleum-based chemicals.

- Fragrance is often added to personal care products, such as Antiperspirants; face, body and hand lotions; and hair care products. The ingredients in the fragrance are not listed on the label.
- Perfumes and colognes are common examples of fragrance.

Facts about Perfumes

Perfumes:

- Are considered the most concentrated form of fragrance
- Can contain more than 500 chemicals in one product.
- Can trigger symptoms in people with asthma.



2. How can fragrances affect my health and those of patients and other staff?

Some people are more sensitive to perfumes and other scented products than others. The health effects of fragrances can include: headaches (including migraines), dizziness, nausea, fatigue, shortness of breath/wheezing, and fatigue.

There are a growing number of people who are adversely affected by the widespread use of scented products. For example:



- A population-based study in Denmark found that 42% of the general population reported at least one symptom in the eyes, nose, mouth, throat or

lungs when exposed to fragranced products. Fifty (50%) of the women in the study reported at least one symptom associated with fragrance exposure. ¹

- Scented products can cause respiratory and airway irritation. This can trigger symptoms in people with asthma and other respiratory disorders, sometimes requiring emergency treatment. ²



- Children are more vulnerable to the effects of fragrance due to their smaller size, thinner skin, and increased rate of breathing. ³



- People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity report that fragrances trigger various symptoms — to the point where some sufferers may have to give up many of their usual activities to avoid exposure. ⁴

We ask that you help us create a safer and healthier environment for everyone by becoming fragrance-free.

3. How can I become fragrance free?

- Avoid wearing scented personal care products such as perfume, cologne, aftershave; scented lotions or creams for the body, face or hands; scented hairspray, mousse or gel; scented deodorant/antiperspirant; and scented sunscreen.
- Use personal care products labeled “fragrance-free”, “unscented”, or “scent-free”. Most brands have fragrance – free products available at the same price as their scented counterparts.
- Make your own natural alternatives; For example, scent-free aloe vera gel can be used as a hair gel.



We sincerely thank you in advance for your cooperation. Remember, you play a key role in creating a safer, healthier environment for all at Women’s College Hospital.

1. Elberling, J. et al. (2005). Mucosal symptoms elicited by fragrance products in a population-based sample in relation to atrophy and bronchial hyper-reactivity. *Clinical Exp Allergy*, 35:75-81.
2. Fisher, B.E. (1998). Scents and sensitivity. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. Retrieved October 19, 2006 from <http://ehponline.org/docs/1998/106-12/focus.html>.
3. Canadian Lung Association (2006). Pollution and air quality. Retrieved November 28, 2006 from http://www.lung.ca/protect-protegez/pollution-pollution/indoor-interieur/scents-perfums_ephp