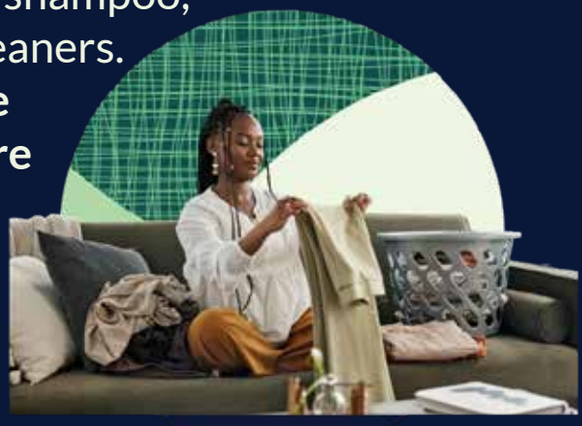
WeavingVoices

Secret Scents

Many people enjoy fragrances in products like shampoo, lotions, cosmetics, laundry detergents, and cleaners. But did you know that **fragrances can be made up of more than 100 chemicals, all of which are kept secret by manufacturers?** If fragrance ingredients were simply listed on the product label, a consumer could choose products free of their specific allergens.



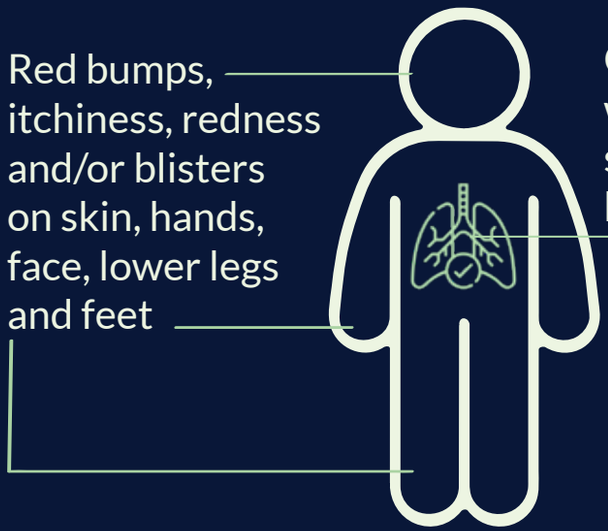
28% of the general population is sensitized to at least one kind of allergen *(fragrance, food, pollen, etc.)*.

11% of people are sensitized to fragrance.

Fragrance is one of the most frequently identified allergens.

Tens of millions of people in the US are sensitized to common fragrance ingredients.

Fragrance Reaction Symptoms



Important Note: This graphic focuses on skin allergy, but allergy is neither the only nor the most severe health problem linked to fragrance. Neurotoxic effects, respiratory effects, immune system impacts and others are all associated with fragrance and deserve greater investigation and attention than they have received.

Women and Fragrance Allergies

More likely to use personal care products, perfumes, and scented cleaning products

Three times more likely than men to have fragrance allergies

Twice as likely to report adverse symptoms from fragrance exposure

Become sensitized to fragrance earlier than men, around ages 28-29

Female-dominated occupations are significantly more likely to be associated with fragrance allergy, like massage therapists, cosmetologists, household workers, and stylists.

Children and Fragrance Allergies

Girls have higher rates of sensitization than boys.

5% of US children who are dermatology patients are sensitized to fragrance.

Children are more sensitive to fragrance.

18% of U.K. children diagnosed with eczema in one study are sensitized to fragrance.

Skin Sensitization & Challenges of Treatment

Sensitization to a fragrance allergen is **irreversible.** If you are sensitized, the best strategy is to avoid the allergen altogether, but this is hard to do. **Moisturizing lotion** is commonly recommended to help prevent flare-ups. Independent testing has shown that even some "fragrance-free" brands contain fragrance allergens.

83% of over-the-counter moisturizing lotions contain fragrance.

20% of fragrance allergy patients take sick leave from their work due to their condition.

70% of patients with hand eczema seek professional medical care for their condition.

$1-$3.8 billion

Annual costs to insurance companies and Medicaid for the treatment of contact dermatitis and eczema in the U.S.

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What's in Your Cabinet?

Common cosmetic products can cause fragrance allergy.

The most common cosmetic products causing fragrance allergies are **deodorants, lotions, colognes, or fine perfumes.**

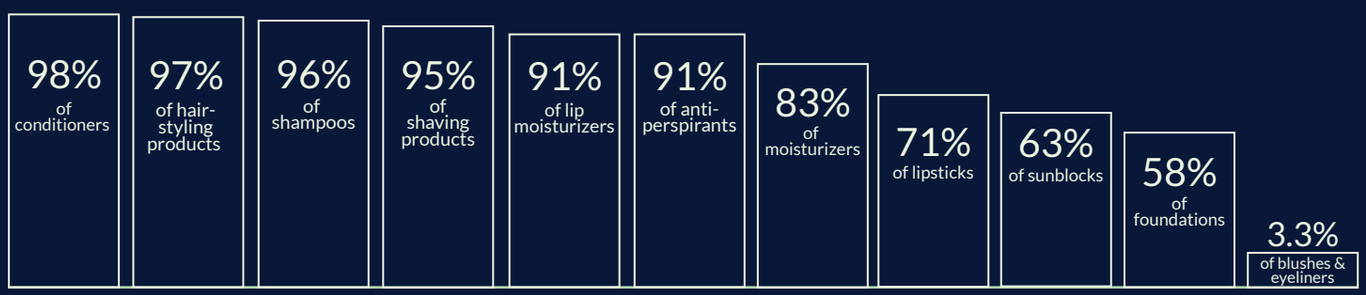
The most common fragrance allergens in **cosmetic products** are:

- **Geraniol:** rose scent
- **Eugenol:** spicy, clove-like aroma
- **Hydrocitronellol:** floral aroma, suggestive of Lily of the Valley
- **A-amylcinnamal:** jasmine-like scent

The most common fragrance allergens in **cleaning products:**

- **Limonene:** orange scent
- **Hexyl cinnamal:** chamomile, floral scent
- **Citronellol:** rose scent
- **Butylphenyl methylpropional (aka Lilial):** lily of the valley scent

Fragrance is found in:



Protecting Our Health: A Policy of Transparency

Right now, consumers have no way of avoiding allergens or other chemicals in fragranced products because most companies keep fragrance ingredients a secret. Labels will simply say "fragrance" instead of listing the ingredients.

Three Things You Can Do Right Now:

1. Choose fragrance-free, where available
2. Buy from companies that disclose all their ingredients
3. Ask companies that do not disclose ingredients to change their policies

Find out more about fragrance ingredients at bit.ly/weavefragrance

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