

1. Fragrance has been used for centuries with a long history of safe use.

Up until the late 1800s virtually all raw materials came from plant or animal sources. Use of fragrance was primarily for religious, medicinal, and luxury use. Presently 80-90% of the materials used in modern fragrance are synthetic. Multiple scented products are used on a daily basis. Both materials and use patterns are vastly different their ancient counterparts. Safety based on history of use does not apply unless both materials used and use is the same.

2. Fragrance is well regulated.

By all accounts, the fragrance industry is primarily self-regulated. Safety tested before marketing is not required and ingredients used in fragrance formulas do not have to be disclosed even to regulatory agencies. In general fragrance is a very low priority among regulatory agencies and there is little monitoring of compliance or enforcement of laws that are in place. There is a self-regulatory system in place within the fragrance industry. Compliance with recommendations are voluntary and rarely monitored. It is not unusual for products to contain several known sensitizers.

3. Fragrance can be maintained in a "personal circle of scent"

Scented products are volatile substance and get into the air quickly. Once in the air, containment to a defined space is impossible. Further scented products are designed to diffuse into the air and linger.

4. Natural means products are safe.

Whether a product is made of natural or synthetic materials in and of itself is not an indication of safety. Properties other than the source of the materials determine its safety. Natural materials do have a longer history of use so that more is known about beneficial and negative qualities. Obviously toxic natural materials have been eliminated from use over the centuries. There is no legal definition for "natural" so the term when used on labels may be misleading.

5. Concerns related to scented products are not based on science.

In relationship to use there is limited information available. However, there is considerable science available that supports both health concerns. Present medical and scientific literature supports concerns related to allergy, respiratory effects, bioaccumulation, and other potential health concerns.

6. The effects of fragrance are purely psychological.

There are certainly psychological effects of fragrance. Odor interpretation is often tied to past experiences and odor is a powerful stimulus for memory. Unpleasant odors are frequently considered bad and pleasant odors benign. Odor is only one property of the materials used in fragrance. Odors can have physical effects such as stimulating hunger, triggering alarm responses, etc. There are both psychological and physical aspects involved in odor detection and interpretation. In addition fragrance materials have properties in addition to odor that can cause physical effects. Materials may be allergens and irritants, stimulate the trigeminal nerve, be carcinogens, have estrogenic effects and many other properties that cause physiological effects that are unrelated to odor.

7. Fragrance can alter emotion and mood

There is also a growing body of literature that supports fragrant botanicals contain active ingredients that can alter mood and emotional state. The mechanisms involved seem to be both psychological and physical.