

Chemicals and their health effects

Common health effects from exposure to synthetic fragrance

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the following health problems have been associated with fragrance exposure: asthma, Reactive Airway Disease (RADS), difficulty breathing, coughing, fatigue, eye irritation, sinusitis, rhinitis, inflammation of mucous membranes, skin problems including dermatitis, immune system damage, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, changes in blood pressure, cancer, and even death in severe cases due to respiratory failure.

Effects on the brain and nervous system include: convulsions, headaches/migraines, depression, dizziness, irritability, confusion, panic attacks, anxiety, memory loss, impaired concentration, drowsiness, insomnia, impaired vision, ataxia, stupor, spaciness, giddiness, slurred speech, twitching muscles, tingling in the limbs, and loss of muscular coordination. 1991 EPA Study by Larry Wallace. "Identification of Polar Volatile Organic Compounds in Consumer Products and Common Microenvironments."

Fragrance chemicals and their related health problems

Acetone-dryness of the mouth and throat; dizziness, nausea, lack of coordination, slurred speech, drowsiness, and in severe cases coma; it acts primarily as a CNS depressant. Benzene-irritation of the eyes and respiratory system; decrease in white blood cells, headaches, impaired judgment, and menstrual disorders. Phenol-eye, nose, and throat irritation, abdominal pain; cardiac arrhythmias and failure, cardiovascular collapse, chromosomal aberrations and damage; cold sweats, collapse, confusion, headaches, hemolytic anemia, profuse sweating, and ringing in the ear. Toluene-skin, eye, and respiratory irritant, CNS depressant, liver and kidney disorders, and toxic brain dysfunction. Benzyl acetate-skin, eye, respiratory and gastrointestinal irritant, vomiting, diarrhea, tissue damage, and abnormal EEG's. Limonene-skin and eye irritant and sensitizer; stomach irritant, albumin and blood in urine; and many CNS effects. ^{1,2}

¹ Harte, J. et.al. Toxics A to Z: A Guide to Everyday Pollution Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

² Wilson, C. Chemical Exposure and Human Health: A Reference to 314 Chemicals with a Guide to Symptoms and a Directory of Organizations. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1993.