

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)

The Importance of Being Scent/Fragrance-Free

Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB)

Being scent/fragrance-free means avoiding the use of scented products such as perfumes, colognes, scented lotions, and other fragranced personal care items. Fragrance-free environments can significantly improve the well-being and accessibility for individuals with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS), and other health conditions such as respiratory illnesses, migraines, dermatitis, autistic people and those who react to strong sensory stimuli, and people with different disabilities.

Why is being scent/fragrance-free important?

1. **Promoting Inclusivity and Removing Barriers to Access:** Being scent/fragrance-free creates an inclusive environment where people with disabilities can fully participate without experiencing adverse health effects. Scents can trigger symptoms such as headaches, migraines, respiratory distress, dizziness, and nausea, making it difficult for individuals to engage in social, educational, and work-related activities.
2. **Respiratory Health:** Fragrances contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma, respiratory distress, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and trigger allergies. The chemicals in fragrances can irritate the airways, trigger breathing difficulties, and worsen symptoms for individuals with respiratory conditions.
3. **Symptoms on Exposure to Chemicals in Products:** People with disabilities, especially those with MCS, can experience severe reactions to even small amounts of fragrance chemicals. Fragranced products contain a variety of chemicals that can cause symptoms such as headaches, skin irritation, breathing and cognitive difficulties, and fatigue.
4. **Sensory Reactions:** Many individuals, including autistic people, and those with sensory processing disorders, have heightened sensitivities to sensory stimuli - including fragrances. Exposure to scents can overwhelm their sensory systems, leading to sensory overload and increased discomfort.
5. **Accommodating Multiple Disabilities:** Being fragrance-free is an important accommodation for individuals with MCS and other disabilities who may also have other



health conditions. By eliminating fragrances, we create an environment that is accessible and supportive for individuals with diverse needs and reduce barriers to inclusion.

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