

WHY SCENT-FREE HEALTHCARE?

FRAGRANCE-FREE POLICIES ARE INCLUSIVE AND ENSURE ACCESS FOR ALL

A HIDDEN BARRIER TO CARE

Hospitals, clinics, and care facilities are meant to be safe. For people with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) and other chronic conditions, scented environments can be harmful.

Exposure to scented products in healthcare settings can cause:

- Breathing difficulties
- Severe migraines
- Nausea and dizziness
- Disorientation or fainting
- Inflammation and flare-ups of chronic illness

This creates a barrier to accessing essential care, from doctor visits to emergency services.

Going fragrance-free is a low-cost, high-impact solution to improve indoor air quality, accessibility, safety, and equity in care.

It's time to make fragrance-free the standard in healthcare.

WHO IS AFFECTED?

IT'S NOT JUST PEOPLE WITH MCS

Fragrance exposures harm many vulnerable populations, including:

- People with asthma, COPD, autism, and allergies.
- Children and seniors.
- Cancer patients.
- People with autoimmune or neurological conditions.
- Pregnant individuals and newborns.

Fragrance-free policies protect everyone, not just people with MCS.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

FRAGRANCES ARE A HEALTH HAZARD

Studies have found that:

- Over **1 in 3 Canadians** report adverse health effects from exposure to fragranced products (Steinemann, 2016; Caress & Steinemann, 2009).
- More than **1.13 million Canadians** have a medical diagnosis of MCS (Canadian Community Health Survey, 2020).
- Exposure to fragrances in public spaces, especially in healthcare is a recognized accessibility issue (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2007).
- Fragrance-free healthcare is supported by public health recommendations and human rights guidelines, including the UNCRPD's Concluding Observations to Canada (2025) and the Accessible Canada Act (2019).

FRAGRANCE-FREE HEALTHCARE IS ACHIEVABLE

Healthcare facilities must:

- Implement fragrance-free policies.
- Use fragrance-free products for cleaning, hand hygiene, and personal care.
- Post visible signage and inform staff and patients.
- Provide guidance on how to choose fragrance-free products.

Learn more at
<https://aseq-ehaq.ca>

Help create a
healthcare system
that works for
everyone



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