

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

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.

Help create a healthcare system that works for everyone.

Learn more at aseq-ehaq.ca

Together, we can build safer, healthier, more inclusive environments.

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L'ASSOCIATION POUR LA SANTÉ ENVIRONNEMENTALE DU QUÉBEC
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF QUEBEC

Canada

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Why Scent-Free Healthcare?

Fragrance-free policies are inclusive and ensure everyone has access



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



Dizziness and nausea



Disorientation and fainting



Inflammation and flare-ups of chronic illness

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

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 products¹



More than 1.13 million Canadians have a medical diagnosis of MCS²



Exposure to fragrances in public spaces, especially in healthcare is a recognized accessibility issue³



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)

References

- Steinemann, 2016; Caress & Steinemann, 2009
- Robins S. et al. (2026). *MCS prevalence in Canada (2000–2020)*. IJERPH.
- Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2007