

Scent sensitivity... makes sense

What is scent sensitivity?

Exposure to perfumes, colognes, and other scented products can trigger health problems for some individuals.

Some people with asthma and other respiratory illnesses, chronic heart or lung diseases, migraines, allergies, environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity can experience mild to severe symptoms when exposed to scented products.

More information

The following websites offer information about scent sensitivity:

- Scent sensitivity page on Yukonnect
<https://yukonnect.gov.yk.ca/employeeinfo/health-safety-wellness/Pages/scent-sensitivity.aspx>

www.psc.gov.yk.ca/scent_sensitivity.html

For more information on scent sensitivity contact your Human Resources branch.



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Did You Know?

The chemicals used to make the scents in products such as perfume, cologne, hairspray, air fresheners, and cleaning products linger in the air even when we can no longer smell them.

Using scented products in the workplace increases the amount of chemicals in our workplace air and may contribute to the increasing sensitivity to these chemicals.

As we age, our olfactory (smelling) sense declines and we may be using more scent perceivable by others than we realize.

The application of a scented product in a small area such as a washroom can leave a heavy concentration of chemicals in the air for a long period. A highly sensitive individual can be severely affected hours after someone wearing minimal scent has left.

Sensitive individuals can experience a wide variety of symptoms from the chemicals used in these products, including:

What about Unscented Products?

Products labeled “unscented” or “fragrance-free” which do not appear to contain scents cannot guarantee that no scent chemicals may actually have been added to the product.

- According to Health Canada’s Cosmetic Program these terms mean that *“there have been no fragrances added to the cosmetic product, or that a masking agent has been added in order to hide the scent.”*
- If the word fragrance or flavour is listed as ingredients, then there is likely to be fragrance in the product. If you are unsure about a product, it may help to contact the manufacturer for more information.
- More and more products now have truly fragrance-free versions which you can find at your grocery or pharmacy.

- Eye, nose and throat irritation
- Headache or migraine
- Nausea or dizziness
- Inability to concentrate or anxiety
- Fatigue, weakness or joint pain
- Allergic reactions or asthma attacks
- Skin irritation
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling tired or weak

Actions we can all take:

Employers, unions and employees have the responsibility to provide or contribute to a healthy and safe workplace for all employees and to support concerns of employees with health needs.

and each of us can help to create a healthier work environment for everyone by reducing the amount of chemicals in our indoor air. Scent sensitivity makes sense!

- Please be courteous by keeping your fragrance within your own personal “scent circle,” less than an arm’s length away.
- Do not apply scent in public areas such as washrooms.
- If attending meetings or training why not be scent free?

If you have a concern regarding scented products:

- Speak to individuals who are using scent or have a scented product in their area.
- Talk to your supervisor or manager and they will contact the Human Resources branch if they have questions.