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Be Choosy! News, Events and Tips

If someone were to ask you, "What's that lovely fragrance you're wearing?" would you say, "Oh, that's hormone disruptors, allergens and chemicals that have never been assessed for safety. It's my signature scent." Of course you wouldn't. But there is a good chance that reply would be accurate.

– Mia Davis, Campaign for Safe Cosmetics



Do you....

- Spritz perfume on the wrist for special evening events?
- Dab behind the ear every morning?
- Receive department store bottles o' sexiness on holidays?
- Impulse purchase knock-off fragrances?
- Sneeze or have headaches mysteriously when a coworker applies layers of products, leaving a vision of Peanut's Pig Pen's dustcloud?
- Know fragrance is among the top five allergens in North America?

In **non-toxic living 101**, curious women choose fragrance-free whenever given the option. Fragrances – whether in lotion, detergent or cologne - is a catch-all phrase for hundreds of possible combinations of natural essences and synthetic chemicals. Sadly, it is legal and common for manufacturers to "disclose some chemical constituents on the ingredient lists but lump others together in the **generic category** of fragrance." Leaving us, the everyday-me's of the world, zero chance for educated decision-making. Unfortunately, some ingredients act like hormones inside our bodies, trigger allergies or skin dermatitis.

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and the Environmental Working Group recently disclosed their findings in [Not So Sexy](#), a study on popular fragrances.

Intrigued, and desiring to interpret the report, I downloaded the 37-pages. Sitting in the Saturday's sun with highlighter in hand, I searched for the answers to: **What Do We Need to Know?** and **What Can We Do?**

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What Do We Need to Know?

If all ingredients were reliably listed - **and** we had a cool phone app to interpret - we would discover:

- Sensitizers that trigger allergic reactions such as asthma, wheezing, headaches and contact dermatitis. *Not So Sexy* discovered an average of 14 undeclared chemicals in the products analyzed. Giorgio Amarni Acqua Di Gio contained 19 different sensitizing chemicals! Poor cubicle buddies of heavy fragrance users!
- Multiple hormone disrupters associated with thyroid effects and estrogen mimickers. (Dab, dab here....dab, dab there...ewww...)
- FDA lacks the authority to require manufactures to test personal care products for safety. (Grrr.)
- The International Fragrance Association and the Research Institute for Fragrance Materials assessed only 27 of 91 ingredients found in products analyzed in *Not So Sexy*.

This stinks.

What Can We DO?

- If you enjoy using colognes or perfumes, please **educate** yourself. My highlights are just a sliver of the report. [Download or review](#) the report so you can learn about the 17 brands studied, as well as ingredients such as musks, diethyl phthalate, and environmental pollutants.
- Alternatively, skip to report pages 36 and 37 for companies who fully disclose all ingredients as part of a pledge of safety and transparency. Be cautious when shopping in general, as marketing is reeking of unregulated definitions like natural, pure, and organic.
- **Simplify** is the answer for me. Save eighty bucks a year and wean yourself from the bottle.
- **Continue to be vigilant.** The study focused on colognes and perfumes, but you can choose wiser by avoiding synthetic fragrances from bath products to laundry supplies. Then proudly push past aisles dedicated to synthetic indoor air pollution, I mean, "air fresheners".
- In these odorous times, *we* should not have to interpret ingredients for safety. Proof of safety should rest on the shoulders of manufacturers, and enforced by the FDA. Join the masses and [ask Congress to give the FDA the authority](#) to **ensure the safety of cosmetics** and along with full disclosure of ingredients.

Some of my favorite responses to the report:

www.momsrising.org/blog/secret-troubling-chemicals-in-popular-fragrances and
www.teensturninggreen.org/get-involved/abercrombie-and-fitch-stop-the-spray-campaing.html

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Not So Sexy has received press attention around the world – from Europe to Canada, from blogs to newspapers. If you think your friends may not have caught a whiff of this discussion, **forward this message**. So, be free little newsletter.....travel the world and enlighten.....

Until next time, **Congratulations** on your journey to choosing wiser, selecting simpler and respecting the body.

Take care,
Kristi Marsh

If you have received this from a kind acquaintance, please [subscribe for future editions](#).

P.S. Next week, *Be Choosy!* will reduce shopping induced anxiety with a directory of caring companies. Stay tuned!

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