

## The Health Risks of Twenty Most Common Chemicals Found in Thirty-One Fragrance Products.

Principal chemicals found in scented products are:

ACETONE (in: cologne, dishwashing liquid and detergent, nail enamel remover)

- On EPA, RCRA, CERCLA Hazardous Waste lists. "Inhalation can cause dryness

of the mouth and throat; dizziness, nausea, incoordination, slurred speech, drowsiness, and, in severe exposures, coma." "Acts primarily as a central nervous system (CNS) depressant."

BENZALDEHYDE (in: perfume, cologne, hairspray, laundry bleach, deodorants, detergent, vaseline lotion, shaving cream, shampoo, bar soap, dishwasher detergent) - Narcotic. Sensitizer. "Local anesthetic, CNS depressant"...

irritation to the mouth, throat, eyes, skin, lungs, and GI tract, causing nausea and abdominal pain." "May cause kidney damage." "Do not use with contact lenses."

BENZYL ACETATE (in: perfume, cologne, shampoo, fabric softener, stickup air freshener, dishwashing liquid and detergent, soap, hairspray, bleach, after shave, deodorants) - Carcinogenic (linked to pancreatic cancer); "From vapors: irritating to eyes and respiratory passages, exciting cough." "In mice: hyperanemia of the lungs." "Can be absorbed through the skin causing systemic effects." "Do not flush to sewer."

BENZYL ALCOHOL (in: perfume, cologne, soap, shampoo, nail enamel remover, air freshener, laundry bleach and detergent, vaseline lotion, deodorants, fabric softener) - "irritating to the upper respiratory tract" .."headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, drop in blood pressure, CNS depression, and death in severe cases due to respiratory failure."

ETHANOL (in: perfume, hairspray, shampoo, fabric softener, dishwashing liquid and detergent, laundry detergent, shaving cream, soap, vaseline lotion, air fresheners, nail color and remover, paint and varnish remover) - On EPA Hazardous Waste list; symptoms: "...fatigue; irritating to eyes and upper respiratory tract even in low concentrations..." "Inhalation of ethanol vapors can have effects similar to those characteristic of ingestion. These include an initial stimulatory effect followed by drowsiness, impaired vision, ataxia, stupor..." Causes CNS disorder.

ETHYL ACETATE (in: after shave, cologne, perfume, shampoo, nail color, nail enamel remover, fabric softener, dishwashing liquid) - Narcotic. On EPA Hazardous Waste list; "...irritating to the eyes and respiratory tract" .. may cause headache and narcosis (stupor)" ..."defatting effect on skin and may cause drying and cracking" ..."may cause anemia with leukocytosis and damage to liver and kidneys" "Wash thoroughly after handling."

LIMONENE (in: perfume, cologne, disinfectant spray, bar soap, shaving cream, deodorants, nail color and remover, fabric softener, dishwashing liquid, air fresheners, after shave, bleach, paint and varnish remover) - Carcinogenic. Prevent its contact with skin or eyes because it is an irritant and sensitizer." "Always wash thoroughly after using this material and before eating, drinking, ...applying cosmetics. Do not inhale limonene vapor."

LINALOOL (in: perfume, cologne, bar soap, shampoo, hand lotion, nail enamel remover, hairspray, laundry detergent, dishwashing liquid, vaseline lotion, air fresheners, bleach powder, fabric softener, shaving cream, after shave, solid deodorant) - Narcotic. ..."respiratory disturbances" ... "Attracts bees." "In animal tests: ataxic gait, reduced spontaneous motor activity and depression ... development of respiratory disturbances leading to death." .. depressed frog-heart activity." Causes CNS disorder.

METHYLENE CHLORIDE (in: shampoo, cologne, paint and varnish remover) - Banned by the FDA in 1988! No enforcement possible due to trade secret laws protecting chemical fragrance industry. On EPA, RCRA, CERCLA Hazardous Waste lists. "Carcinogenic" ..."Absorbed, stored in body fat, it metabolizes to carbon monoxide, reducing oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood." "Headache, giddiness, stupor, irritability, fatigue, tingling in the limbs." Causes CNS disorder.

a-PINENE (in: bar and liquid soap, cologne, perfume, shaving cream, deodorants, dishwashing liquid, air freshener) - Sensitizer (damaging to the immune system).

g-TERPINENE (in: cologne, perfume, soap, shaving cream, deodorant, air freshener) - "Causes asthma and CNS disorders."

a-TERPINEOL (in: perfume, cologne, laundry detergent, bleach powder, laundry bleach, fabric softener, stickup air freshener, vaseline lotion, cologne, soap, hairspray, after shave, roll-on deodorant) - ..."highly irritating to mucous membranes"... "Aspiration into the lungs can produce pneumonitis or even fatal edema." Can also cause "excitement, ataxia (loss of muscular coordination), hypothermia, CNS and respiratory depression, and headache." Prevent repeated or prolonged skin contact."

### **Relevant Facts:**

95% of chemicals used in fragrances are synthetic compounds derived from petroleum. They include benzene derivatives, aldehydes and many other known toxics and sensitizers - capable of causing cancer, birth defects, central nervous system disorders and allergic reactions. Neurotoxins: At Home and the Workplace, Report by the Committee on Science & Technology, U.S. House of Representatives, Sept. 16, 1986. (Report 99-827)

Central Nervous System disorders (brain and spine) include Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Chloroform was found in tests of fabric softeners: EPA's 1991 study.  
A room containing an air freshener had high levels of p-dichlorobenzene (a carcinogen) and ethanol: EPA's 1991 study.

An FDA analysis (1968-1972) of 138 compounds used in cosmetics that most frequently involved adverse reactions, identified five chemicals (alpha-terpineol, benzyl acetate, benzyl alcohol, limonene and linalool) that are among the 20 most commonly used in the 31 fragrance products tested by the EPA in 1991!

Thirty-three million Americans suffer from sinusitis (inflammation or infection of sinus passages).

Twelve million Americans have asthma. Asthma and asthma deaths have increased over 30% in the past 10 years.

Headaches cost \$50 billion in lost productivity and medical expenses and 157 million lost work days in 1991. "Focus on Fragrance and Health," by Louise Kosta, The Human Ecologist, Fall 1992.

More sites to check out information on the toxins in everyday products:

[www.concernedmoms.com](http://www.concernedmoms.com),

[www.checnet.org](http://www.checnet.org)

[www.environmentaldefense.org](http://www.environmentaldefense.org).

[http://www.unsafehome.com/a\\_z/](http://www.unsafehome.com/a_z/)

<http://www.onetiredpup.com/Toxins1.html>

<http://www.toolsforhealthyschools.org/products.html>

<http://www.worldwatch.org/pubs/goodstuff/>

[http://oaspub.epa.gov/enviro/ef\\_home2.toxics](http://oaspub.epa.gov/enviro/ef_home2.toxics)

# TOP "10" HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS

By Richard Alexander

**AIR FRESHENERS:** Most air fresheners interfere with your ability to smell by coating your nasal passages with an oil film, or by releasing a nerve deadening agent. Known toxic chemicals found in an air freshener: Formaldehyde: Highly toxic, known carcinogen. Phenol: When phenol touches your skin it can cause it to swell, burn, peel, and break out in hives. Can cause cold sweats, convulsions, circulatory collapse, coma and even death.

**AMMONIA:** It is a very volatile chemical, it is very damaging to your eyes, respiratory tract and skin.

**BLEACH:** It is a strong corrosive. It will irritate or burn the skin, eyes and respiratory tract. It may cause pulmonary edema or vomiting and coma if ingested. WARNING: never mix bleach with ammonia it may cause fumes which can be DEADLY.

**CARPET AND UPHOLSTERY SHAMPOO:** Most formulas are designed to over power the stain itself, they accomplish the task but not without using highly toxic substances. Some include: Perchloroethylene: Known carcinogen damages liver, kidney and nervous system damage. Ammonium Hydroxide: Corrosive, extremely irritable to eyes, skin and respiratory passages.

**DISHWASHER DETERGENTS:** Most products contain chlorine in a dry form that is highly concentrated. # 1 cause of child poisonings, according to poison control centers.

**DRAIN CLEANER:** Most drain cleaners contain lye, hydrochloric acid or trichloroethane. Lye: Caustic, burns skin and eyes, if ingested will damage esophagus and stomach. Hydrochloric acid: Corrosive, eye and skin irritant, damages kidneys, liver and digestive tract. Trichloroethane: Eye and skin irritant, nervous system depressant; damages liver and kidneys.

**FURNITURE POLISH:** Petroleum Distillates: Highly flammable, can cause skin and lung cancer. Phenol: (see Air fresheners, Phenol.) Nitrobenzene: Easily absorbed through the skin, extremely toxic.

**MOLD AND MILDEW CLEANERS:** Chemicals contained are: Sodium hypochlorite: Corrosive, irritates or burns skin and eyes, causes fluid in the lungs which can lead to coma or death. Formaldehyde: Highly toxic, known carcinogen. Irritant to eyes, nose, throat, and skin. May cause nausea, headaches, nosebleeds, dizziness, memory loss and shortness of breath.

**OVEN CLEANER:** Sodium Hydroxide (Lye): Caustic, strong irritant, burns to both skin and eyes. Inhibits reflexes, will cause severe tissue damage if swallowed.

**ANTIBACTERIAL CLEANERS:** may contain: Triclosan: Absorption through the skin can be tied to liver damage.

**LAUNDRY ROOM PRODUCTS:** Sodium or calcium hypochlorite: Highly corrosive, irritates or burns skin, eyes or respiratory tract. Linear alkylate sulfonate: Absorbed through the skin. Known liver damaging agent. Sodium Tripolyphosphate: Irritates skin and mucous membranes, causes vomiting. Easily absorbed through the skin from clothes.

**TOILET BOWL CLEANERS:** Hydrochloric acid: Highly corrosive, irritant to both skin and eyes. Damages kidneys and liver. Hypochlorite Bleach: Corrosive, irritates or burns eyes, skin and respiratory tract. May cause pulmonary edema, vomiting or coma if ingested. Contact with other chemicals may cause chlorine fumes which may be fatal.

### **OTHER NASTY THINGS THAT ARE AROUND YOUR HOME**

**PESTICIDES:** Most pesticides have ingredients that affect the nervous system of insects. Dimpylate: Better known as Diazinon, extremely toxic. Impairs the central nervous system. Chlorinate Hydrocarbons: Suspected carcinogen and mutagen. Accumulates in food and in fatty tissue. Will attack the nervous system.

Organophosphates: Toxic and poisonous. If you can smell it, your lungs are absorbing it.

**FLEA POWDERS:** Carbaryl: Very toxic, causes skin, respiratory and cardiovascular system damage. Chlordane: Accumulates in the food chain, may damage eyes, lungs, liver, kidney and skin. Dichlorophene: Skin irritation: May damage liver, kidney, spleen and central nervous system.

**LICE SHAMPOO:** Especially vulnerable are children. Lindane: Inhalation, ingestion, or ABSORPTION through the SKIN causes vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions and circulatory collapse. May cause liver damage, stillbirths, birth defects and cancer.

**CAR WASH AND POLISH:** Petroleum Distillates: Associated with skin and lung cancer, irritant to skin, eyes, nose and lungs. Entry into the lungs may cause fatal pulmonary edema, most marked Danger, Harmful or Fatal.

**TAR AND BUG REMOVER:** Contains XYLENE and PETROLEUM DISTILLATES.

### **Warning Terms Used Are Significant:**

**DANGER** - Harmful or fatal if swallowed A taste to a teaspoonful taken by mouth could kill an average sized adult.

**WARNING** - Harmful if swallowed A teaspoonful to an ounce taken by mouth could kill an average sized adult

**CAUTION** - Harmful if swallowed An ounce to over a pint taken by mouth could kill an average sized adult

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**WARNING:** You can't trust warning labels!

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) analyzed 2983 chemicals used in personal care products. The results were as follows:

- 884 of the chemicals were toxic
- 314 caused biological mutation
- 218 caused reproductive complications
- 778 caused acute toxicity
- 148 caused tumors
- 376 caused skin and eye irritations

## Did You Know?

- There are more than 3 million poisonings every year.
- Household cleaners are the #1 cause of poisonings in children.
- Regular shampoos often contain formaldehyde as a preservative
- Since 1980 asthma has increased by 600%
- Common household products have been identified as triggers of asthma
- A 15 year study found that women who worked at home had a 54% higher death rate from cancer than women who had jobs outside the home.
- Manufacturers ARE NOT required to list the exact ingredients on a label
- Chemical names are often disguised by using "trade names", so you may not recognize the chemical for what it truly is
- A women's fertility has also been negatively affected by the increase use of chemicals. In 1934 only 21 cases of endometriosis existed in the entire world. Today over 5 million women have this condition, which causes infertility in the US alone.

## Why Should We Worry About Toxic Chemicals?

- According to the EPA, most homes have airborne concentrations of hazardous chemicals that are two to five times higher indoors than outdoors.
- According to the EPA, toxic chemicals found in the home are three times more likely to cause cancer than outdoor airborne pollutants.
- The Consumer product Safety Commission connects 150 chemicals commonly found in our homes to allergies, birth defects, cancer and psychological disorders.
- The National Cancer Institute has a list of twenty known carcinogens and over 2,200 chemicals that are probable carcinogens. Many of these chemicals are in the cleaners and personal care products you buy at your local grocery store.

Source: ConcernedMoms.com

## Other names for Phenol:

Other names for phenol include carboic acid, benzenol, phenylic acid, hydroxybenzene and phenic acid.