

Scientific Study

Fragranced Products Proven Toxic by Scientist

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A new study reveals that your air freshener pollutes the air. Your laundry soap and fabric softener may make you sick or contribute to your asthma. Both contain highly toxic carcinogenic chemicals that are not revealed on the label by manufacturers.

For decades, people with multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) have been the highly susceptible canaries in the coal mine who report the toxic effects of everyday products. The larger community has received these reports with doubt and even denial, often misguided by industry's misrepresentation that their products are benign in the name of financial profits.

However, there is now proof that every day fragranced consumer products such as air fresheners, laundry supplies, personal care products, and cleaners are as toxic as people with MCS say they are.

A University of Washington study of six top-selling fragranced consumer products which are widely used in homes, businesses, institutions, and public places found the products emit dozens of toxic chemicals such as acetaldehyde, acetone, benzaldehyde, tert-butyl alcohol, 2-butanone, chloromethane, 1,4-dioxane, ethanol, ethyl acetate, isopro-

pyl alcohol, and α -pinene. Many of these chemicals are listed on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hazardous chemicals list.

In a recent press release Anne Steinemann, PhD said, “I was surprised by both the number and the potential toxicity of the chemicals that were found. Nearly 100 volatile organic compounds were emitted from these six products, and none were listed on any product label. Plus, five of the six products emitted one or more carcinogenic 'hazardous air pollutants,' which are considered by the Environmental Protection Agency to have no safe exposure level.”

Steinemann analyzed three air fresheners and three laundry products and discovered that, unlike the European Union, no law in the U.S. requires disclosure of all chemical ingredients in consumer products or in fragrances.

Until the legal system catches up and stronger regulations are in place, Steinemann suggests that, “Instead of air fresheners people use ventilation, and with laundry products, choose fragrance-free versions.”

Reference

Steinemann AC, *Fragranced consumer products and undisclosed ingredients*, *Environ Impact Asses Rev* (2008), doi:10.1016/j.eiar.2008.05.002

