

*Scientific Studies:****Could It Be Your Clothes?***

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There are many dangerous things in the world. But did you ever think that your fabric softener might be one of them? Products we use to wash our clothing leave behind residues that we wear on our skin constantly. They should be safe. But are they? Is that pesky neighbor of yours who claims your clothes dryer emissions make her ill onto something? Science shows she is!

Anderson Laboratories, Inc., located in West Hartford, Vermont, conducted a study in 2000 to determine whether there is any biological basis for complaints that fabric softener emissions can cause acute adverse effects in certain individuals. Using mice, researchers exposed them to the emissions of five commercial fabric softener dryer sheets, one at a time, for a period of 90 minutes each. Several respiratory cycle parameters were measured, including the pause after inspiration, the pause after expiration, and the

midexpiratory airflow velocity. They found the emissions induced sensory irritation, pulmonary irritation, and airflow limitation, revealing mild inflammation of the lungs.

So, what’s in these dryer sheets that is a respiratory irritant that may contribute to allergies, asthma, multiple chemical sensitivities, and other respiratory disorders? The researchers performed gas chromatography / mass spectroscopy analysis of the emissions of one dryer sheet and found isopropylbenzene, styrene, trimethylbenzene, phenol, and thymol, all well known respiratory irritants.

Dry laundry, much like that which we wear each day, was shown to emit sufficient chemical residue to cause sensory irritation. Perhaps your child’s asthma and your allergies have a cause after all. Could it be your clothes?

The researchers went on to place a dryer sheet in a room with the mice overnight to see if it would have any effect. Sure enough, that single sheet doubled the rate of sensory irritation that wearing dry clothing produced. Pet’s and small children, due to their smaller size, are much more vulnerable to these chemical emissions than adults. Do we really want these dangerous products in our homes, on our bodies, and near our children?



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The results of this study provide a toxicological basis to explain human complaints of adverse reactions to fabric softener emissions. It might be time to go apologize to your neighbor.

Fortunately, there are inexpensive alternatives you both can use to enjoy better health and appreciate soft, clean clothes. Most health food stores have safer products, but what you really need may be lurking in your kitchen or garage already.

White Distilled Vinegar

¼ to 1 cup at start of rinse cycle.

Deodorizes & softens clothes.

Removes soap scum.

Leaves no vinegar odor when dry.

Do not hang colors in direct sunlight as they may fade.

Glycerin

Mix 1 cup of glycerin per gallon of water and add ½ cup to rinse cycle.

Baking Soda

1 cup at the start of the wash cycle.

Tennis Ball or Tennis Shoe

Put a clean, old tennis ball/shoe in the dryer to soften & reduce static.

3% Hydrogen Peroxide Solution

Soak a washcloth in peroxide and put it in the dryer to reduce static.

It is possible to live a healthier, safer, life. These simple solutions cost pennies and have many other uses in the home. Our health should be our first priority!

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Reference

Anderson RC, Anderson JH. Respiratory toxicity of fabric softener emissions. J Toxicol Environ Health A. 2000 May 26;60(2):121-36.

