What’s that smell?

PROBLEMATIC CHEMICALS IN PERFUME
Contents

4
Introduction

6
Results
Problematic chemical ingredients found in 20 perfumes

12
Results
Per perfume

32
Spotlight on endocrine disruptors
Why Denmark takes EDCs seriously

40
How perfumes are labelled in the EU

41
Take home messages & Tips for consumers
Introduction

Problematic Chemicals in Perfume

Many women regularly use fragranced consumer products, such as perfume. However, very little is known about the ingredients actually used to give each perfume its unique fragrance. Perfumes can contain up to 300 different chemicals. More than 2,500 different fragrance ingredients are used in perfumes and perfumed consumer goods. Yet many fragrance ingredients cannot be found on the ingredient list on the exterior packaging as they are protected as a trade secret. Under the EU regulation on cosmetic products, it is mandatory for cosmetics in Europe to be labelled with their ingredients. Fragrances have been exempted from this requirement. Only a few fragrance ingredients have to be mentioned on the label. As a result consumers can’t make informed decisions to avoid chemicals that could negatively affect their health and the environment.

With this report, we aim to provide more insight into which ingredients are labelled and used in perfumes and why some of them are of concern. Studies indicate that women may use 12 to 16 personal care products in a single day, including perfume or fragranced personal care products. This exposes them to a cocktail of different chemicals daily.

Scientists are increasingly concerned about these chemical mixtures because people are exposed to thousands of chemicals at the same time, often in low doses, but in some cases they can interact and potentiate each other’s effects. Increased consumer awareness may help in reducing daily exposure. This is particularly relevant for vulnerable groups, such as pregnant and breastfeeding women, and women with serious health conditions, such as breast cancer.

For this study, we have collected information on the ingredients in 20 perfumes in Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands. They were selected based on popularity among consumers in these countries. The ingredient lists were then analysed for problematic chemicals. In the following report, you will find the outcomes of our analysis and we will elaborate on specific health concerns related to exposure to substances used in perfume.
What’s that smell?

**RESULTS**

**PROBLEMATIC CHEMICAL INGREDIENTS FOUND IN 20 PERFUMES**

We compared the ingredients contained in the 20 perfumes collected in Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands with substances of concern listed by several authoritative bodies. This resulted in 26 problematic substances in 20 perfumes. The problematic substances can be categorised in four different groups: Suspected endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs), reprotoxic substances, allergens and substances that are harmful to the environment.
Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs)
EDCs are chemicals that can interfere with the body’s sensitive hormone system. Hormones regulate bodily functions, such as metabolism, growth and reproductive development. The most minuscule levels of hormones can have an effect on these functions. Exposure to very low levels of EDCs can therefore have an impact on these important systems.
EDCs and suspected EDCs are found in food, toys, cosmetics and other consumer products, as well as in medicines and plastic products. Scientific evidence has shown that exposure to EDCs has contributed to increases in the incidence of neurodevelopmental, reproductive and metabolic disorders, as well as some cancers.5

Reprotoxic substances
Reprotoxic substances can have a negative effect on sexual function and fertility in both men and women. Examples of these negative effects are low sperm counts in men and miscarriages in women. These substances may also cause developmental toxicity in children. An increasing number of studies indicate that fertility problems are on the rise in both men and women in the Western world.6

Allergenic substances
Fragrance ingredients can cause allergies. Allergies are lifelong, irreversible conditions with potentially disabling effects. Skin sensitisation is a severe consumer health concern, which results in significant impairment of quality of life and adverse consequences for fitness for work. The annual cost to society and the economy is projected to be as high as EUR 240bn in the EU.7 A European population survey revealed that at least 4.1% of all adults have a perfume allergy.8

Substances that harm the environment
UV filters added to cosmetics to protect the skin or prolong the shelf life of the product can have a negative impact on marine life. The UV filter ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate, which we found in several perfumes, has been detected in almost all water sources around the world.9 Limonene, one of the most common ingredients in fragrances, is classified in the EU as being very toxic to aquatic life.

---

1–8 More information on the lists used can be found in the annex on page 48.
## Substances of concern found in 20 perfumes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha-isomethyl ionone</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amyl Cinnamal</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzyl alcohol</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance, solvent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzyl benzoate</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance, solvent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzyl cinnamate</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzyl salicylate</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHT</td>
<td></td>
<td>antioxidant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butylphenyl methylpropional</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamyl alcohol</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citral</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citronellol</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus aurantium amara flower water</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance, skin conditioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coumarin</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disodium EDTA</td>
<td></td>
<td>stabilising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate</td>
<td></td>
<td>UV absorber, stabiliser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethylhexyl salicylate</td>
<td></td>
<td>UV absorber, stabiliser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugenol</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farnesol</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraniol</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexyl cinnamal</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydroxycitronellal</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isoeugenol</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limonene</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linalool</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parfum</td>
<td></td>
<td>fragrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octocrylene</td>
<td></td>
<td>UV absorber, stabiliser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results per perfume

My way
eau de parfum
GIOGIO ARMANI

Pink molécule 090.09
eau de parfum
ZARKOPERFUME

PURCHASED IN BELGIUM
Ingredients: Parfum 1 Linalool 1 Benzyl salicylate 1 Benzyl alcohol 1 Hydroxycitronellal 1 Limonene 1 Ethylhexyl salicylate 1 Hexyl cinnamal 1 Geraniol 1 Citronellol 1 Eugenol 1 Citral 1 Alpha-isomethyl ionone 1 Isoeugenol 1 Cinnamal 1 Benzyl benzoate 1

PURCHASED IN DENMARK
Ingredients: Parfum 1
Lady million
eau de parfum
PACO RABANNE

Ingredients:
- Parfum
- Limonene
- Benzyl salicylate
- Alpha-isomethyl ionone
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Ethylhexyl salicylate
- Hexyl cinnamal
- Linalool
- Coumarin
- Citronellol
- Geraniol
- Citral
- Benzyl alcohol
- Isoeugenol

PURCHASED IN THE NETHERLANDS

No 5
eau de parfum
CHANEL

Ingredients:
- Parfum
- Benzyl alcohol
- Benzyl benzoate
- Benzyl cinnamate
- Benzyl salicylate
- Cinnamyl alcohol
- Citral
- Citronellol
- Coumarin
- Eugenol
- Farnesol
- Geraniol
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Isoeugenol
- Limonene
- Linalool
- Alpha-isomethyl ionone
Results per perfume

**Good girl**
eau de parfum

**CAROLINA HERRERA**

**Purchased in the Netherlands**

**Ingredients:** Parfum 🟢 Linalool 🟢 Hydroxycitronellal 🟢 Benzyl salicylate 🟢

Coumarin 🟢 Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate 🟢 Benzyl benzoate 🟢

Ethylhexyl salicylate 🟢 Limonene 🟢 Geraniol 🟢 Citronellol 🟢 Isoeugenol 🟢

Hexyl cinnamal 🟢 Benzyl alcohol 🟢 Citral 🟢

**Alien**
eau de parfum

**THIERRY MUGLER**

**Purchased in the Netherlands**

**Ingredients:** Parfum 🟢 Benzyl salicylate 🟢 Benzyl alcohol 🟢

Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate 🟢 Coumarin 🟢 Limonene 🟢 Geraniol 🟢

Ethylhexyl salicylate 🟢 Alpha-isomethyl ionone 🟢 Citronellol 🟢 Linalool 🟢

Citral 🟢 Benzyl benzoate 🟢 BHT 🟢
Results per perfume

Perfect

*Marc Jacobs*

**Ingredients:**
- Parfum
- Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate
- Linalool
- Octocrylene
- Alpha-isomethyl ionone
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Citronellol
- Limonene
- Hexyl cinnamal
- Coumarin
- Benzyl benzoate
- Benzy alcohol
- BHT

The scent

*Hugo Boss*

**Ingredients:**
- Parfum
- Benzyl salicylate
- Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate
- BHT
- Limonene
- Citronellol
- Linalool
- Coumarin
- Benzyl benzoate
- Hexyl cinnamal
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Citral
- Geraniol
Flower by Kenzo
eau de parfum

KENZO

Ingredients: Parfum  Geraniol  Citronellol  Hydroxycitronellal  Linalool  Alpha-isomethyl ionone  Limonene  Farnesol  Isoeugenol  BHT  Citral  Benzyl alcohol  Benzyl benzoate  Coumarin  Benzyl salicylate

PURCHASED IN BELGIUM

Romance
eau de parfum

RALPH LAUREN

Ingredients: Parfum  Hydroxycitronellal  Citronellol  Geraniol  Benzyl alcohol  Linalool  Alpha-isomethyl ionone  Limonene  Hexyl cinnamal  Coumarin  Cinnamyl alcohol  Citral  Benzyl benzoate  Eugenol  Farnesol
Black opium
eau de parfum
YVES SAINT LAURENT

This is her!
eau de parfum
ZADIG & VOLTAIRE

PURCHASED IN DENMARK
Ingredients: Parfum Benzyl salicylate Benzyl alcohol Hydroxycitronellal Hexyl cinnamal Limonene Linalool Geraniol Citronellol Cinnamyl alcohol Amyl cinnamal Citral Coumarin Benzyl benzoate

PURCHASED IN BELGIUM
Ingredients: Parfum Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate Coumarin Limonene Benzyl benzoate Cinnamyl alcohol Isoeugenol Linalool Benzyl alcohol BHT
J’adore

eau de parfum

Dior

Purchased in Denmark

Ingredients: Parfum Benzyl cinnamal Hexyl cinnamal Benzyl salicylate Citronellol Hydroxycitronellal Alpha-isomethyl ionone Citrus aurantium amara flower water Benzyl benzoate Limonene Linalool Geraniol Citral Benzyl alcohol Benzy alcohol cinnamate Cinnamyl alcohol Farnesol

Si

eau de parfum

Giorgio Armani

Purchased in Denmark

Ingredients: Parfum Benzyl salicylate Benzyl alcohol Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate Linalool Limonene Ethylhexyl salicylate Hydroxycitronellal Hexyl cinnamal Geraniol Cinnamyl alcohol BHT Alpha-isomethyl ionone Citronellol Eugenol Citral Benzyl benzoate Farnesol Coumarin
Results per perfume

Scandal
eau de parfum
JEAN PAUL GAULTIER

Ingredients:
- Parfum
- Benzyl salicylate
- Limonene
- Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate
- Linalool
- Coumarin
- Ethylhexyl salicylate
- Alpha-isomethyl ionone
- Citral
- Geraniol
- Benzyl alcohol
- Benzyl benzoate

PURCHASED IN BELGIUM

La vie est belle
eau de parfum
LANÇÔME

Ingredients:
- Parfum
- Linalool
- Benzyl salicylate
- Limonene
- Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate
- BHT
- Geraniol
- Alpha-isomethyl ionone
- Coumarin
- Farnesol
- Citral
- Citronellol
- Benzyl alcohol
- Benzyl benzoate

PURCHASED IN DENMARK
Twilly d´Hermès

**Ingredients:**
- Parfum
- Limonene
- Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate
- Alpha-isomethyl ionone
- Benzyl salicylate
- BHT
- Ethylhexyl salicylate
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Butylphenyl methylpropional
- Coumarin
- Citronellol
- Linalool
- Geraniol
- Eugenol
- Benzyl alcohol
- Farnesol
- Citral
- Benzyl benzoate
- Disodium EDTA

Flowerbomb nectar

**Ingredients:**
- Parfum
- Benzyl salicylate
- Linalool
- Benzyl alcohol
- Ethylhexyl salicylate
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Limonene
- Coumarin
- Geraniol
- Benzyl benzoate
- Citral
- Citronellol

---

**Purchased in the Netherlands**

Twilly d´Hermès

**Ingredients:**
- Parfum
- Limonene
- Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate
- Alpha-isomethyl ionone
- Benzyl salicylate
- BHT
- Ethylhexyl salicylate
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Butylphenyl methylpropional
- Coumarin
- Citronellol
- Linalool
- Geraniol
- Eugenol
- Benzyl alcohol
- Farnesol
- Citral
- Benzyl benzoate
- Disodium EDTA

Flowerbomb nectar

**Ingredients:**
- Parfum
- Benzyl salicylate
- Linalool
- Benzyl alcohol
- Ethylhexyl salicylate
- Hydroxycitronellal
- Limonene
- Coumarin
- Geraniol
- Benzyl benzoate
- Citral
- Citronellol
Results per perfume

**Signature**
* eau de parfum

**CHLOÉ**

**Purchased in the Netherlands**

* Ingredients: Parfum Ⓥ Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate Ⓥ Octocrylene Ⓥ BHT Ⓥ Limonene Ⓥ Hexyl cinnamal Ⓥ Benzyl salicylate Ⓥ Citronellol Ⓥ Linalool Ⓥ Geraniol Ⓥ Alpha-isomethyl ionone Ⓥ

**L’Interdit**
* eau de parfum

**GIVENCHY**

**Purchased in Belgium**

* Ingredients: Parfum Ⓥ Ethylhexyl methoxycinnamate Ⓥ Linalool Ⓥ Limonene Ⓥ Citronellol Ⓥ Geraniol Ⓥ BHT Ⓥ Benzyl salicylate Ⓥ Eugenol Ⓥ Alpha-isomethyl ionone Ⓥ Citral Ⓥ Coumarin Ⓥ Benzyl alcohol Ⓥ
The use of EDCs is on the rise
Human biomonitoring studies have found EDCs in Europeans’ urine\(^\text{10}\) and blood\(^\text{11}\). EDCs have also been detected in amniotic fluid\(^\text{12}\) and breast milk, indicating that children are exposed before and shortly after birth.

As early as 2012, the World Health Organization (WHO)\(^\text{13}\) warned that endocrine disrupting chemicals pose a global threat. Eight years later, the European Commission emphasised that the use of EDCs is on the rise, which poses serious risks to human health and creates an economic cost to society.\(^\text{14}\) EDC exposure during foetal development may result in negative effects on brain development and growth.\(^\text{15}\) Furthermore, EDCs have been linked to reproductive\(^\text{16}\) and fertility problems, such as drastically falling sperm counts, as well as hormone-dependent cancers, such as prostate and breast cancer.

Breast cancer and EDCs
In 2020, female breast cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancer with 2.3 million new cases worldwide and the highest incidence in developed countries.\(^\text{17}\) Around 80% of breast cancers are oestrogen-dependent. A known risk of prolonged exposure to oestrogens is the development of breast cancer. Most EDCs have oestrogenic or antiandrogenic properties and can stimulate cell proliferation and migration, enhancing cancer development and progression as well as reducing the effectiveness of chemotherapy.\(^\text{18,19}\) Three substances detected in perfume –
What’s that smell?

Vulnerable groups such as pregnant and breastfeeding women, young children, teenagers and patients receiving anti-cancer treatment should be protected from exposure to EDCs.

benzyl salicylate, BHT and butylphenyl methylpropional – have been shown to interfere with oestrogenic pathways and may therefore increase the risk of breast cancer.20,21

The pervasive presence of EDCs results in lifelong exposure. EDCs can be transferred from the mother to the foetus via the placenta and to the newborn through breast milk. Vulnerable groups, such as pregnant and breastfeeding women, young children, teenagers and patients receiving anti-cancer treatment, should therefore be protected from continuous exposure to EDCs.

Over a thousand chemicals are suspected to have endocrine disrupting properties.22 At present, only a handful of these substances have been regulated in the European Union. In the Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, the European Commission acknowledges that the current regulatory framework is unfit to identify and regulate endocrine disruptors. As a result of the absence of a firm regulatory framework on EDCs in the EU, several countries, including Denmark and France, have put in place a national action plan to protect their citizens from EDCs. Moreover, national authorities in Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, France, Spain and the Netherlands have set up a website called Endocrine Disruptor Lists (EDlists.org) to help improve transparency and the identification of endocrine disrupting chemicals.23
What’s that smell?

Could you elaborate on the work of the Centre on Endocrine Disruptors?

The centre is an interdisciplinary scientific network without walls, consisting of three research groups.

1. A research group at the Rigshospitalet, which studies endocrine diseases and reproduction. Furthermore, this group is involved in population studies and human biomonitoring.

2. A research group at the University of Southern Denmark, which, among other things, studies the effects of endocrine disruptors on fish and the aquatic environment. Furthermore, this group develops new test methods for EDCs.

3. A research group at the Danish Technical University, which specialises in reproductive toxicology.

The main purpose of the CeHoS is to build and gather new knowledge on endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) with the focus on providing information requested in connection with the preventive work of the regulatory authorities.

Denmark is seen by many as a frontrunner in research, raising public awareness and government measures to protect citizens against exposure to EDCs. Why are EDCs such a priority issue in Denmark (whereas other EU countries do not see EDCs as a problem)?

In the 1990s, Denmark regrettably held the world record for incidences of testicular cancer. We were also seeing many young men with suboptimal semen quality. That did not necessarily mean they could not father a child, but they would probably need help. Today, 10% of parents in Denmark receive some sort of assistance.
What’s that smell?

of reproductive assistance to get pregnant. It is often said that the reason for this is that woman today tend to have children when they are older than in previous decades. That is not entirely fair. There is sufficient evidence that male subfertility plays an important role.

Scientists and the medical profession in Denmark, and Dr Niels Skakkebaek in particular, raised the alarm regarding an increase in reproductive health-related problems in Denmark, to which the government responded with a national approach to deal with this challenge.

Why should we be concerned about EDCs?

Because hormones have a very important signalling function that regulates functions in the body. EDCs can interrupt that signalling function. This may lead to very obvious effects, such as malformations in the male reproductive organs, but more subtle changes may also occur and only manifest later in life. For example, exposure to EDCs may lead to a small change in the functioning of the pancreas, which may contribute to the development of obesity or diabetes later in life.

Our tests showed that several suspected EDCs were present. Should we be concerned about suspected EDCs?

Many chemicals on the market today were introduced before EDCs became an issue. Thousands of these chemicals were never properly tested for endocrine disrupting properties, which means that we have a data gap and are therefore engaged in a huge human experiment. Since there are so many suspected EDCs, it is important that we do not evaluate them one by one. This takes too much time. Group evaluation for similar EDCs could help to speed up the process. An important impediment is that the level of evidence needed to prove that a substance is an endocrine disruptor is very high and very complex, which also slows down the process of identification. I also think that producers should be required to prove that a substance they wish to place on the market is not an EDC. In the meantime, the work of consumer organisations is important and helps to inform consumers about how they can reduce their exposure to EDCs.

Are there any hopeful/positive developments in the area of EDCs?

Yes, both the EU Green Deal and the EU Chemicals strategy for sustainability are important signals that the EU is taking this issue seriously. I see this as a leap forward.

What would be your best advice to consumers to avoid EDCs?

I would go for less chemicals. This is not always possible, but choosing products with ecolabels is a good start and a step that does not require expertise in reading and understanding content lists. If a certain non-ecolabel product is very important to you because it smells very nice or works very well, keep it, but try to go for a fragrance-free option or a product with an ecolabel for your other personal care or cleaning products. This is especially important for pregnant women or women considering becoming pregnant.
According to the European regulation on cosmetic products\textsuperscript{25}, the list of ingredients should appear in descending order of weight. Ingredients in concentrations lower than 1% may be listed in any order after those in concentrations higher than 1%. However, perfume aromatic compositions and their raw materials need only be referred to as ‘parfum’ or ‘aroma’. This means that ingredients that together comprise the perfume or aroma are not specified on the ingredient list. The reason for this is that perfume composition is protected as a trade secret. The current system of fragrance safety is based on self regulation. It is managed by the International Fragrance Association (IFRA) and its research branch, the Research Institute for Fragrance Materials (RIFM). It is unclear to what extent the responsible authorities in the EU member states monitor the compliance of fragrance ingredients with the cosmetics regulation.

The EU has seen positive developments in terms of transparency. Currently, 26 fragrance allergens should be listed on the packaging. The European Commission is expected to expand the current list of allergens with another 62 allergens that are common in fragrance.\textsuperscript{26}
Tips for consumers

Reduce your daily fragrance exposure
In addition to your favourite perfume, many of your personal care and cleaning products contain fragrances. When you add up all the chemicals from these products, you may be exposed to a cocktail of problematic chemicals. It therefore makes sense to try to minimise your exposure to fragrances. For some of you, it may be very difficult to part with your favourite perfume. In that case, you could consider using it for special occasions only or spraying the perfume on your clothes instead of your skin (but beware of stains on your clothes). You might also consider choosing fragrance-free options in other personal care products you use, to reduce your total exposure. You should also be aware that body lotion and deodorants are among the biggest contributors to perfume allergy.

Always go for a fragrance-free option for children
When children are exposed to fragrance, they risk developing lifelong allergies. Still, fragrance is used in personal care products for children and even newborns. And it can also be found in less obvious products, like toys. If you want to be sure, check the packaging as fragrance allergens in toys must be mentioned on the label.

Reduce your exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals
In this study, we found the following suspected EDCs:
• Benzyl salicylate
• BHT
• Butylphenyl methylpropional
• Ethylhexyl methylcinnamate
• Ethylhexyl salicylate
• Octocrylene

Several other suspected EDCs are used in cosmetics, such as benzophenones, parabens, cyclopentasiloxane, cyclomethicone, ethyl salicylate, homosalate, resorcinol and salicylic acid. Forbrugerrådet Tænk has found 29 different suspected EDCs in cosmetics.

There are trusted labels out there to help you find fragrance-free options, such as the blue label certified by Asthma Allergy Denmark and Allergy Certified. Products with these labels are widely available throughout Europe.

What’s that smell?

Reduce your daily fragrance exposure
In addition to your favourite perfume, many of your personal care and cleaning products contain fragrances. When you add up all the chemicals from these products, you may be exposed to a cocktail of problematic chemicals. It therefore makes sense to try to minimise your exposure to fragrances. For some of you, it may be very difficult to part with your favourite perfume. In that case, you could consider using it for special occasions only or spraying the perfume on your clothes instead of your skin (but beware of stains on your clothes). You might also consider choosing fragrance-free options in other personal care products you use, to reduce your total exposure. You should also be aware that body lotion and deodorants are among the biggest contributors to perfume allergy.

Always go for a fragrance-free option for children
When children are exposed to fragrance, they risk developing lifelong allergies. Still, fragrance is used in personal care products for children and even newborns. And it can also be found in less obvious products, like toys. If you want to be sure, check the packaging as fragrance allergens in toys must be mentioned on the label.

Reduce your exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals
In this study, we found the following suspected EDCs:
• Benzyl salicylate
• BHT
• Butylphenyl methylpropional
• Ethylhexyl methylcinnamate
• Ethylhexyl salicylate
• Octocrylene

Several other suspected EDCs are used in cosmetics, such as benzophenones, parabens, cyclopentasiloxane, cyclomethicone, ethyl salicylate, homosalate, resorcinol and salicylic acid. Forbrugerrådet Tænk has found 29 different suspected EDCs in cosmetics.
What’s that smell?

Looking for these suspected EDCs on the label is one way of avoiding the substances, but it is not an easy task. The good news is that there are digital tools available to help you avoid them. Several apps are available to help you identify suspected endocrine disrupting chemicals or other substances of concern.

If you don’t feel like using an app, a very good alternative to reduce your exposure to EDCs is to look out for products that have a trusted ecolabel, such as the Nordic Swan and the EU Ecolabel.

An app developed by Forbrugerrådet Tænk for Danish consumers, Kemiluppen rates cosmetic products A, B or C based on the content. By scanning the barcode of a product, consumers can identify substances of concern, such as suspected endocrine disrupting chemicals and allergens. The app is available in Danish.

The Yuka app was developed by an independent French organisation. By scanning the barcodes of food and personal care products, the platform rates the item and offers detailed information. Since January 2018, about 2 million products have been registered (including 70% of food products and 30% of cosmetic products). The app is available in five languages (French, English, Spanish, Italian and German) and is available in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Spain, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, United States, Australia and Italy.

Tox Fox is an app developed by German organisation BUND. By scanning a barcode, consumers can identify suspected endocrine disrupting chemicals and nanoparticles in consumer items such as cosmetics. The app is available in German.
What's that smell?

Lists we have consulted to identify suspected endocrine disrupting chemicals, allergens, reprotoxic substances and substances that are of environmental concern.

- Endocrine disruptors lists (2020) – Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands and France
- The EU Commission priority list of potential endocrine disruptors in cosmetics (2019)
- Endocrine Disrupter priority list (EU 2007)
- SIN (‘Substitute It Now!’) List (CHEMSEC)
- Substances mentioned by the National Allergy Research Centre (Denmark)
- List of undesirable substances LOUS list (Danish EPA)
- List of harmonised classifications (EU)
- Candidate List of Substances of Very High Concern for Authorisation (EU)
- SCCS opinion on fragrance allergens in cosmetic products and other opinions by the EU scientific committees
  See ‘Opinions open for comments’
- List of 26 fragrance allergens subject to individual labelling
- Listing of POPS in the Stockholm convention
- The Priority List of the Norwegian Environment Agency
- Perfluorinated substances – The Helsingør statement and The Madrid Statement
What’s that smell?

THIS PROJECT IS A JOINT COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS

Forbrugerrådet Tænk

Claus Jørgensen, head of project Forbrugerrådet Tænk

Kom op tegen Kanker (Stand up to Cancer)

Ann Gils, director of prevention and early detection Kom op tegen Kanker

Tegengif - Erase all Toxins (the Netherlands)

Annelies den Boer, chairperson Tegengif

Forbrugerrådet Tænk is an independent Danish consumer organisation, founded in 1947, which works on the promotion of sustainable and socially responsible consumption. Forbrugerrådet Tænk is the oldest consumer organisation in Europe. It defends consumer rights and makes consumers a force in the market. Through chemical testing and communication to consumers, the Danish Consumer Council’s Think Chemicals initiative specifically helps consumers to avoid problematic chemicals when shopping. https://kemi.taenk.dk/

Kom op tegen Kanker (Stand up to Cancer) is a leading non-governmental organisation in the fight against cancer in the Flemish region of Belgium. Stand up to Cancer’s mission is to reduce the prevalence of cancer in the Flemish community and improve the quality of life for people living with cancer. https://www.komoptegenkanker.be

Tegengif - Erase all Toxins (the Netherlands) is a not-for-profit organisation based in Amsterdam. Our goal is a non-toxic living environment. We raise public awareness of consumers’ daily exposure to toxic chemicals by producing appealing research, campaigning and influencing policy. We believe that increased awareness will both stimulate demand for toxin-free products and increase public support for regulations leading to a toxin-free world. www.tegengif.nl

Literature references

2. https://www.videncenterforallergi.dk/allergener/parfume/
10. https://www.nature.com/articles/s41419-020-66284-3
18. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6864600/
21. https://endocrinereduction.org/interactive-tools/tedx-list-of-potential-endocrine-disruptors/search-the-tedx-list#name=SearchForAny&sortBy=chemname&action=search&searchcats=all&sortBy=chemname
22. https://redlists.org
Consumers have the right to know which chemicals are used in their perfume, so they can make an informed decision.