



# WOMEN'S VOICES FOR THE EARTH

OUR HEALTH. OUR FUTURE. TOXIC FREE.



## Secret Scents

### The Allergens Hiding in Your Scented Products

A Report by Women's Voices for the Earth  
Messaging Document

Thank you so much for agreeing to be a spokeswoman for our Secret Scents report and campaign! It really helps to have real women who are affected by fragrance allergens tell their stories. Please use this messaging document as a guide to the types of messages and sound bytes that we would love to see appear in the news. But, remember to use your own words and speak from the heart—often those are the best quotes of all.

#### Main Messages

- I have been affected by fragrance allergies, but I have no way of avoiding the ingredients that cause them because companies keep fragrance ingredients a secret.
- I have the right to know if allergens hidden in products, so I can avoid them.

#### Back it up with Some Talking Points

- Anyone with a food allergy can glance at a label and know if it's safe for them to eat. It just makes sense to do the same for people with fragrance allergies.
- Studies show that children are increasingly affected by fragrance allergy.
- Because women are exposed to more perfumed personal care products and cosmetics, we're 2-3x more likely to suffer from fragrance allergies than men.
- Fragrance can be hard to avoid, because it's in the vast majority of household products like cleaners, personal care products, and air fresheners.
- Companies making fragranced products don't tell us about allergens on product labels because disclosure isn't required by U.S. law. But, these same products do tell their European customers about allergens. Disclosing this information to American consumers would be easy, and the right thing to do.
- I say that I'm sensitive to everything, because without ingredient disclosure, I have no way of knowing what's triggering my reactions.
- Ingredient disclosure is the first step, which is what we're trying to achieve with this report. The second step is identifying toxic chemical. The third step is removing those toxic chemicals.



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## What's the Call to Action?

- Go to [womensvoices.org](http://womensvoices.org) and send a letter to the fragrance industry telling them to stop the secrecy around fragrance ingredients in our products.
- Spread the word among your friends and family about this report.

## Tips on Telling Your Story

- The media is looking to you to tell an emotional, relatable story. So talk about how you felt when you had your reaction. Were you embarrassed? Stressed out? Frustrated? Talk about how you felt when you discovered that there were secret allergens in the products you were using. Angry? Motivated? Betrayed?
- Provide some personal details about your story to make it come to life. But, don't go on and on about inconsequential details—reporters are busy people and you don't want them to lose interest.
- The reporter may ask you your full name, age, how you'd like to be titled ("working mom," "consultant," etc.) and your location. Be prepared to provide those details. You don't have to reveal the names of your kids if you don't wish to.
- If a reporter asks a tough question that you don't know the answer to, just refer them to one of the experts at WVE. Cassidy Randall can determine the best person to answer a question: 406-543-3747, [cassidy@womensvoices.org](mailto:cassidy@womensvoices.org).

## Remember to Include:

- Report authors, Women's Voices for the Earth
- URL [womensvoices.org](http://womensvoices.org).

## Ideas for Getting Started:

This is how fragrance affects my daily life:

Is it difficult for you to find personal care products or cleaning products which your health can tolerate?

Have you tried going "fragrance-free"? How hard is that to accomplish?

What happens when you use a scented product that does affect you?

Do you wish you could know what was in the fragrance in products – to better understand what chemicals your body might be reacting to?

Are there scented products that you have found you can use without ill effect? If so? Do you wish you could compare what is in those products with what is in the products that do affect you?

Have you had difficulties treating your condition?