

## How and Why to Be Scent Free

If you are not accustomed to going “scent free”, it's important to think carefully about all the products are you using in your day. You can either not use shampoo, soap, hair gel, hairspray, perfume/scented oils, skin lotion, shaving cream, make up etc, or use fragrance free alternatives for at least the day of the event that is “scent free”.

Becoming Scent-Free is an important step towards access for people with disabilities.

People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (also called Environmental Illness) experience serious and debilitating physical and neurological symptoms when exposed to the chemicals used in most scented products. Often the damage caused by these chemicals causes an individual to react to other intensely volatile substances, Such as essential oils, tobacco smoke, and natural fragrances. The process by which we smell actually involves microscopic particles of that substance being absorbed through mucus membranes and entering the nervous system.

Symptoms of chemical exposure include dizziness, nausea, slurred speech, drowsiness, irritation to mouth, throat, skin, eyes, and lungs, headache, convulsions, and liver and kidney damage. As you can imagine, these symptoms constitute serious barriers for people with chemical sensitivities in work, life, and event attendance. Promoting scent-free environments is very much like adding ramps and curb cuts in terms of the profound difference in accessibility it can create.

### If You Smoke

Please also keep in mind that many chemically sensitive people will also get sick from the smoke clinging to your clothing and hair.

Text from Alison Kafer's *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Appendix C, p175).

Further Reading:

<https://www.mastattack.org/2014/11/fragrance-allergy/>