

# SHARE THE AIR. BE SCENT SMART.



## Scent-Smart Frequently Asked Questions

The following are some commonly asked questions we have received about scent-smart initiatives. If you have further inquiries, please contact your supervisor.

### What can I do to prevent harming people affected by scents?

You can adopt scent-smart practices by avoiding perfumes, aftershaves, colognes, scented lotions, air freshening products and opting for 'fragrance-free,' 'scent-smart,' or 'unscented' versions of personal care products. Many scent-smart personal care products can be found at your local supermarkets and pharmacies.

### What happens if I don't adopt scent-smart practices?

By not following scent-smart practices, you may harm or cause discomfort to someone within the College. When employees or students miss time from work or school because of illness – asthma, allergies, migraine, etc. – there is a cost. Illness means lost productivity and lost learning opportunities. Finally, you undermine Loyalist's commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all.

### Why should I adopt scent-smart practices when there isn't anyone in my office, classroom or Residence who suffers from an allergy or sensitivity? The perfume I wear and the scented products I use aren't bothering anyone.

Do you know that for a fact? Perhaps someone is suffering in silence. Or maybe you will come into contact with someone with a scent sensitivity – in the Dining Hall, at the Fitness Centre, in a meeting, or at the Library.

### What's the difference between products labelled 'fragrance-free,' 'scent-smart,' or 'unscented'?

These terms are used in industry virtually without restrictions. They may only mean that the product has less scent than the scented version of the same product from that manufacturer or that the natural scent of the product has been masked by another chemical. Therefore, these labels can offer no guarantee that a product won't trigger a reaction in someone who is sensitive. Nonetheless, choosing products with these labels is still safer than choosing the scented versions. While it is possible that someone could have a reaction to your personal care product even if you've taken all precautions to avoid this outcome, work with the individual to come to a reasonable solution.

## What is the difference between an allergy and a sensitivity?

An allergy is a condition in which exposure to a material or substance prompts the body's immune system to respond inappropriately. For example, someone can have a skin or a respiratory system allergy. The allergen is most often a response to a protein within the composition of the material. Scent sensitivities are usually a reaction to an irritant that has reached a certain concentration, not an allergy to a specific protein.

**Sources:**

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)  
Dalhousie University – Office of Environmental Health and Safety  
Canadian Medical Association Journal