

MOTHERS & OTHERS FOR CLEAN AIR

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**HEALTHY INDOOR  
BREATHING TOOLKIT**

**AIR FRESHENERS**



For more information about this research, visit  
**[WWW.MOTHERSANDOTHERSFORCLEANAIR.ORG](http://WWW.MOTHERSANDOTHERSFORCLEANAIR.ORG)**

# AIR FRESHENERS

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## THE PROBLEM



Air fresheners do not remove bad smells, they just mask them or cover them up. In the United States, there is no requirement for companies to share the ingredients they use in their air fresheners. You might see the word “fragrance” listed on air freshener packaging - this word is vague and can include many chemicals which have never been tested for safety. Fragrances can contribute to harmful indoor air pollutants, which can be 2-100x higher inside our homes than outside.



Spraying air fresheners in the home only contributes to pollution levels. On average, a U.S. air freshener releases 18 chemicals into the air. Commonly, more than 90% of chemicals in an air freshener are not listed on the product label.



# WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

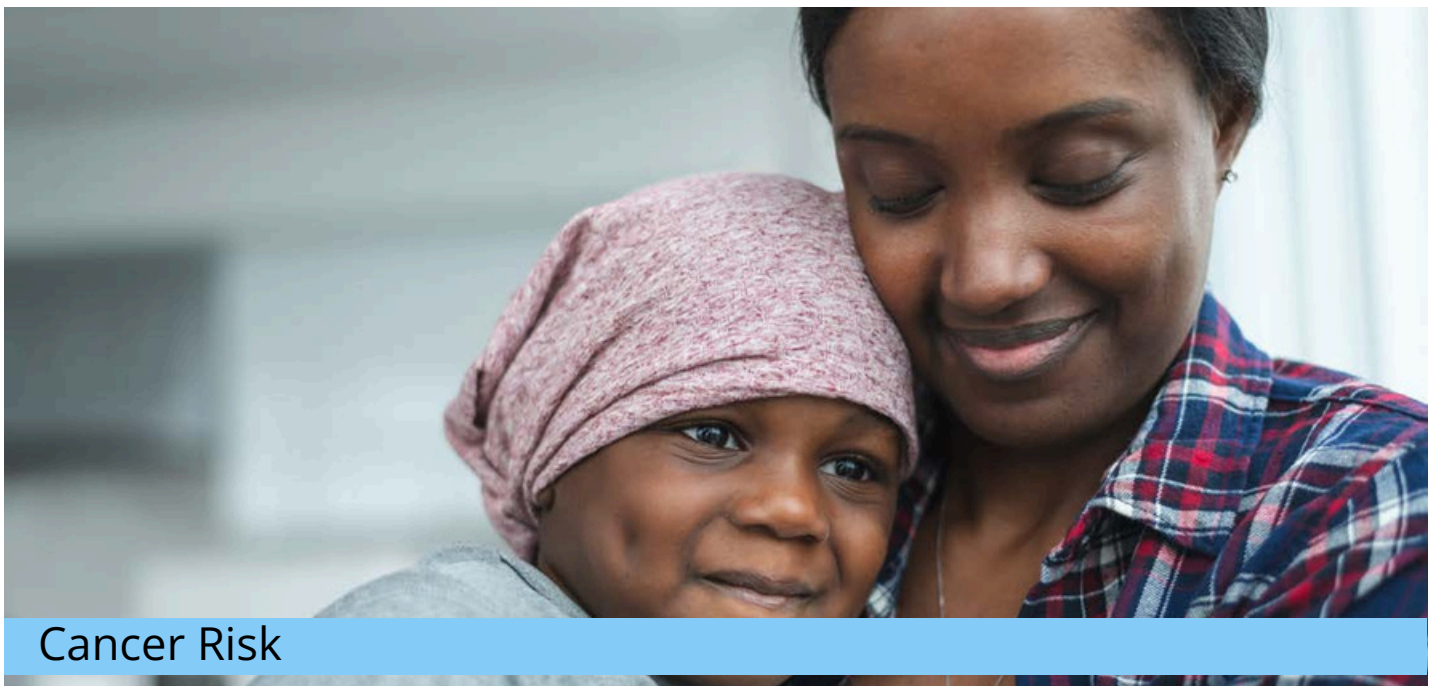
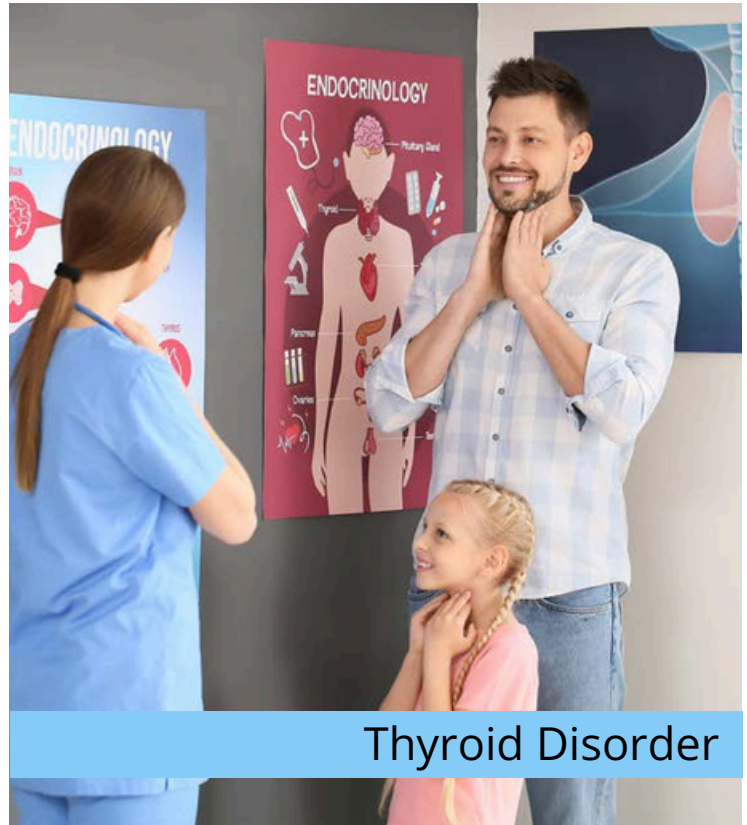
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## TO MY OR MY CHILD'S HEALTH?

Using air fresheners can contribute to...

- Birth Defects
- Damage to DNA
- Cancer Risk
- Male Reproductive System Damage

- Allergies
- Asthma
- Headaches
- Hormone System Disruption





It is best to avoid any air fresheners if possible. [No air fresheners are subject to environmental review](#), and they all release particles and chemicals into the air. Particularly avoid products which use formaldehyde; acetaldehyde; 1,4,dichlorobenzene; and mineral spirits (which can cause damage to DNA and cancer).

If you feel like you need an air freshener to cover up bad smells, it is far better to:



- ✓ Clean up or remove the bad smell than to add more smells to the air.
- ✓ Put exhaust fans in your bathrooms, or open the windows a crack if you don't have an exhaust fan.
- ✓ Use an exhaust fan in the kitchen, or open the window when you cook.
- ✓ Clean up any areas with mold or spills.
- ✓ Clean up and prevent mold according to our Mold Toolkit.



There are no air fresheners which are completely safe. All air fresheners release unnecessary chemicals into the air that you can breathe into your lungs.

However, if your home needs a fragrance boost, consider buying a diffuser to diffuse essential oils into your home. Only purchase essential oils that are pure and have no additives. Be sure to only add a few drops of an essential oil into the diffuser basin at a time.



Even after reading all of this, if you really want a spray bottle of air freshener, we recommend looking for product names from EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning. We encourage you to do your own research to find what is best for you and your family.

[Click Here for EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#)

All products listed below can be found at [Target](#) and/or [Walmart](#) and fall within a reasonable price range.

The products listed here received an "A" rating on the Environmental Working Group's Consumer Guides, except for those specifically marked otherwise (with B next to their name).



### **Aura Cacia Aromatherapy Mist**

Eucalyptus Harvest,  
Lavender Harvest,  
Tangerine & Grapefruit,  
Tea Tree Harvest, Purifying. **A**



### **Air Scense Citra Solv Natural Air "Refreshers"**

Lavender, Lime, Orange,  
Vanilla. **B**



### **Citrus Magic Odor Eliminating Citrus Air Freshener**

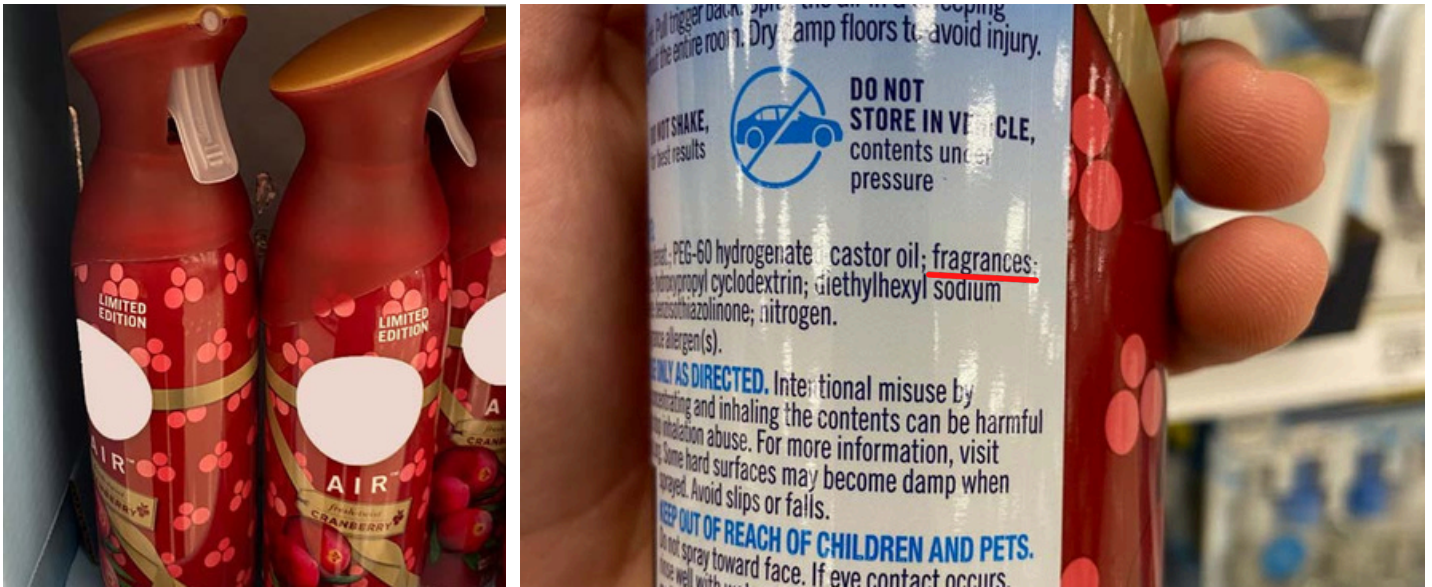
Tropical Citrus. **A**



One of Mothers & Others For Clean Air's Research Associates went to their local store and followed the Healthy Indoor Breathing Toolkit when looking for an air freshener.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

### EXAMPLE NO. 1



Here, we have some air fresheners. If we look at the labeling on the back of the bottle, you'll see the word "*fragrances*" (underlined in red in the second picture). The toolkit tells us that "fragrance" is a vague, catch-all word and that over 90% of ingredients in air fresheners are not listed! Instead, the word "fragrances" is used. With this product, you have no idea what you're spraying into the air (and breathing into your body).

### EXAMPLE NO. 2

The Toolkit tells us that essential oil diffusers are a safer alternative to air fresheners. But be careful, we can see here that not all essential oils are made well. This packaging also advertises "fragrance" instead of specific ingredients.

Avoid this just like we avoided the first example.





Finally, we've found the safest scent to put in our homes.

This product calls itself a "100% Pure Essential Oil Blend", and a quick look at the back packaging confirms this. In the ingredients section, you only see various plant oils (and no "fragrance").

