

# Artificial scents have no place in hospitals

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Artificial scents such as perfumes and after-shave have no place in our hospitals because they can aggravate asthma and other allergies, argues an editorial in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*

About 30% of people report some sensitivity to artificial scents worn by others, and about 27% of those with asthma say that their condition is aggravated by exposure to such scents.

"This is particularly concerning in hospitals, where vulnerable patients with asthma or other upper airway or skin sensitivities are concentrated," write Drs. Ken Flegel, Senior Editor, *CMAJ*, and Dr. James Martin, Department of Medicine, McGill University, Montréal, Quebec. "These patients may be involuntarily exposed to artificial scents from staff, other patients and visitors, resulting in worsening of their clinical condition."

Many public places promote scent-free environments, including some hospitals. The authors argue for a uniform ban on artificial personal scents in Canadian hospitals.

"The high prevalence of [asthma](#) and its adverse effects on health and productivity argue strongly for greater consideration of the air we breathe in our health care centres. Hospital environments free from artificial scents should become a uniform policy, promoting the safety of patients, staff and visitors alike," they conclude.

**More information:** *Canadian Medical Association Journal*,

[www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.151097](http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.151097)

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