



Miamoo fact sheets:

Synthetic Fragrance

What is it?

The large majority of fragrance chemicals are synthetic compounds, with most being synthesized from petroleum products or by products of other industries such as turpentine. Over 80-90% of all fragrance chemicals are synthetic. Synthetic chemicals are used in the fragrance industry because of availability and cost factors. Also using synthetics allow scents not found in nature to be created. It would be impossible to produce perfumes with the intensity and staying power of modern fragrances using all natural materials. (<http://www.fpinva.org/text/OVERVIEW.html>)

How can I recognise them on a product label?

Synthetic fragrances can be identified as

- Parfum
- Fragrance

Why are they potentially harmful to babies?

The young because many of the systems of the body are still developing. Many of the defense mechanisms are not yet fully operational. Children and infants breathe at a faster rate and they are smaller. The rate of exposure in relationship to body weight is greater. When a child and an adult is exposed to the same thing the exposure is greater for the child. And a child's skin is thinner. This means that substances are more easily absorbed through the skin.

Also a child is often in closer proximity to the source than an adult is. Children crawl on the floor and so are more exposed to products used on the floors than an adult walking around in the room. When babies are held their faces are often very close to the hair and clothing of the person hold them. Their noses are closer to the fragranced product

According to the Fragranced Products Information Network fragrance can cause the following irritations:

- Skin irritations and dermatological problems
- photosensitivity
- Trigger for Asthma
- Can cause migranes

Why are they unnecessary in baby skincare products?

- Natural, safer alternatives such as essential oils from plants are available, such as rose, lavender, orange flower water, the list is endless
- Babies smell gorgeous as they are, they don't need perfume

Why do manufacturers use synthetic fragrance?

- It is cheap and cost effective
- They can hook consumers onto a particular product by adding synthetic fragrance and ensuring that the scent every time you buy the product.

How to be informed about what you are putting on your baby's skin

- Know the ingredients that are potentially harmful
- Read the Label and check for the nasties
- Don't be duped by words and imagery on packaging like, "natural, organic, gentle, tear free, calming, soothing, hypoallergenic, dermatologically tested, pure. Search for products which are fragranced with essential oils from plants or those that are fragrance free
- Don't buy products on your baby just because your mum did – times and products have changed.