

## ask the dermatologist



Dr. Sandy Skotnicki-Grant, a Toronto-based dermatologist, answers your sensitive skin questions.

**Q** I've noticed that my neck and shoulders feel itchy after I apply perfume (my eyes water a bit, too). Is it possible to become allergic to perfume after wearing it for many years, and should I switch to essential oils?

**A** Allergic contact dermatitis to fragrances is very common. Recent data put the incidence at 11.7 per cent of the North American population. Dermatitis reactions to fragrance take several days to develop, rather than being immediate. They frequently occur after a product has been used for many years because repeated exposure can result in sensitization and then allergy.

On the other hand, sensitivity to fragrance is an "irritant dermatitis". This results in immediate redness and burning and lasts only a few hours. Irritant airborne reactions to scent can also occur, resulting in headache, stuffy nose or runny eyes. There is no diagnostic test for irritant contact or airborne reactions.

Some fragrance molecules are more commonly associated with true allergic contact dermatitis. However, with irritant reactions, it is usually not one fragrance chemical but the combination of several that produce a response.

People who experience immediate itching, burning or airborne symptoms (such as watery eyes) should avoid commercial fragrances, as they are usually composed of over 20 fragrance molecules. Though they can also cause issues, essential oils are a safer bet since they contain fewer possibly irritating components.

Send the doctor a sensitive skin question at [editor@allergicliving.com](mailto:editor@allergicliving.com). Find Dr. Skotnicki-Grant's clinic at [baydermatologycentre.com](http://baydermatologycentre.com)



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● allergy shots natural beauty



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# GODDESS of GREEN

Take a page from Mother Nature's book with earth-friendly ingredients for your skin. — *Samantha Yaffe*

### 1. MR. SENSITIVE

Designed for men, but irresistible to women, **Unscented Shave Cream** (\$30/150 mL) from the Gentlemen's Refinery mixes old world charm with 100 per cent natural ingredients that soothe razor-irritated skin. **Key Ingredients (KI):** Stearic acid, organic coconut oil, glycerin. **Bonus:** Made in a nut-free facility. [www.upurea.ca](http://www.upurea.ca)

### 2. LIGHT TONE

**Organic Lavender Toner** (\$29/150 mL) by Kimberly Sayer of London is a must-have. Certified nut-free, it's made from just organic lavender flowers and water. **Quick tip:** To reduce redness caused by rosacea, place toner-dampened cotton pads on affected areas for 15 minutes daily. [www.upurea.ca](http://www.upurea.ca)

### 3. FAIR OF FACE

**Cleansing Lotion** by Heiko (\$30/150 mL) removes impurities and makeup without irritating delicate skin around the eyes. **KI:** glycerin, oat amino acids, rye seed extract, lavender oil. Follow up with the illuminating ingredients of **Age Defense**

moisturizer (\$40/45 mL) **KI:** olive oil, jojoba seed oil, magnesium, chamomilla extract, lemon extract. [www.heiko.ca](http://www.heiko.ca)

### 4. TRUE NORTH STRONG AND FREE

Nourish your body with carrot, organic prairie seed and wild St. Lawrence Valley mint in the petroleum-free **Hand & Body Lotion** (apple mint) from the Green Beaver Company (\$8.99/325 mL). **KI:** Water, sunflower seed oil, carrot seed, apple juice, peppermint oil. [www.greenbeaver.com](http://www.greenbeaver.com)

### 5. PRETTY IN A PILL

The **Hair, Skin & Nails** vegetable capsules from femMED (\$29.99/60 capsules) are

designed to promote beauty from the inside out. **KI:** Microcrystalline cellulose and vegetable grade magnesium. **Bonus:** No artificial preservatives, fillers or flavours, and does not contain corn, dairy, egg, gluten or yeast. **Note:** Not suitable for the shellfish allergic. [www.femmed.com](http://www.femmed.com)

### 6. ETHICALLY PURE

Made from Fair Trade ingredients, unscented **Sensitive Hand & Body Cream** by Tashodi (\$23/250 mL) is a luxurious moisturizer that comes with instant good karma. **KI:** De-ionized water, grape seed oil, avocado oil, shea butter. [www.tashodi.ca](http://www.tashodi.ca)



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