

# The Dirty Truth About Dryer Sheets

## 8 Killer Reasons to Ditch Your Commercial Fabric Softeners & Dryer Sheets

**Artificial Fragrances:** Most commercial dryer sheets are loaded with many toxic chemicals; none of which are healthy to have in your home, let alone wear. In addition to all the chemicals that end up on your skin, when heated, the fragrant fumes are also toxic. These toxins go straight to the brain's most sensitive neurological centers and can wreck havoc. When people use dryer sheets, they are actually coating their clothes with artificial chemical perfumes. Many of these chemical fragrance toxins are known carcinogens that cause liver damage and cancer in mammals.

In a recent study performed by UW professor Dr. Anne Steinemann, a research team conducted a small study to understand the effects of fragrances in laundry products (both detergent and dryer sheets). The results discovered more than 25 VOCs emitted from dryer vents, with highest concentrations of acetaldehyde, acetone, and ethanol (two of which are considered carcinogenic). To put it into context, one of the carcinogenic VOCs, acetaldehyde, had emissions that would represent 3% of total acetaldehyde emissions from automobiles in the study area. This is a major emission of toxic chemicals, in your home.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and industry-generated Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) from the 1990s, the following is a list of chemicals in fabric softener products, most in *untested combinations*.

1. **Alpha-Terpineol**—This chemical has been linked to disorders of the brain and nervous system, loss of muscle control, depression, and headaches
2. **Benzyl acetate**—Benzyl acetate has been linked to cancer of the pancreas
3. **Benzyl alcohol**—This upper respiratory tract irritant can cause central nervous system (CNS) disorders, headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness and dramatic drops in blood pressure.
4. **Chloroform**—Neurotoxic, anesthetic and carcinogenic. Really toxic to your brain. Inhaling its vapors may cause loss of consciousness, nausea, headache, vomiting, and/or dizziness, drowsiness.
5. **Ethanol**—Another fabric softener ingredient which is on the EPA's Hazardous Waste list and linked to CNS disorders.
6. **Ethyl Acetate**—causes headaches and is on the EPA Hazardous Waste list
7. **Linalool**—in studies, this chemical caused loss of muscle coordination, nervous system and brain disorders, and depression
8. **Pentane**—causes headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue, drowsiness, and depression

### What's the wisest alternative to toxic dryer sheets? I know of two...



1) Organic Wool Dryer Balls. Find someone who raises organic sheep, and make, some handmade needle felted wool dryer balls. Or, you can find them offered for sale. They are 100% natural. They soften clothes, and are effective at getting rid of static cling and wrinkles. You can even add pure essential oils to the center core of your dryer balls (I put calming lavender into mine), to add a lovely and healthy fragrance.

2) Plastic Dryer Balls. Buy some handy reusable dryer balls made of non-toxic material. They are especially handy for fluffing heavy down comforters, etc.

Either or both of these solutions offer eco-friendly alternatives to commercial dryer sheets and liquid fabric softeners.



#### Sources and References:

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