PLAIN LABEL GUIDE

The Fragrance-Free Home: a room-by-room guide

A free, original guide to reading ingredient lists and swapping scented products room by room.

Plain Label Guide Editorial · plainlabelguide.com · November 2026 edition. Independent, document-based research: we have not tested products ourselves, and nothing here is medical advice.

By Plain Label Guide Editorial Edition of 14 November 2026 | plainlabelguide.com

A free guide to reading ingredient lists and swapping scented products room by room. It is built from the pages published on Plain Label Guide, which work from documents: maker ingredient pages, regulator texts and published studies. We have not tested any product. This guide is not medical advice.

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Before you start: how we define fragrance-free, and what the evidence levels mean

The definition we use

A product counts as fragrance-free in this guide only if the ingredient list published by its maker contains none of these: fragrance, parfum, aroma, perfume, essential oils, or fragrance chemicals. We read the list on the date given and judge nothing else.

This is our own editorial test. It is not a legal definition and it is not a medical standard. In the FDA pages we read we found no definition of "fragrance-free" or of "unscented". The FDA's page on disposable wipes says the agency has no regulations governing those terms, that cosmetic labelling must be truthful and not misleading, and that a cosmetic labelled "fragrance free" should not contain added fragrance ingredients. The same page adds that such a product can still smell of something, pleasant or unpleasant, because of its other ingredients. So fragrance-free describes ingredients, not what your nose reports.

Fragrance is not inherently harmful, and this guide is not against it. The narrower point is that people who want to avoid it need a label that shows whether it is there.

What the evidence levels mean

Every product named in this guide has a record on the site. Each record carries one of three evidence levels and a date. The date is the day we read the source, and it matters because formulas change.

Level	What it means	How it appears below
Maker list, read	We read the ingredient list on the maker's own page and found no fragrance-type entry.	"maker list read" and the date
Maker list, browser capture	The maker's page blocked our automated fetch, so the list was captured from the maker's page in a browser. Same standard of source, one capture.	"maker list, browser capture" and the date
Maker states unscented	The product has no ingredient list at all (trash bags). We quote the maker's own word. This is not an ingredient finding.	"maker states unscented" and the date

Three rules sit behind the levels.

- The maker's page counts. A retailer listing or seller description never counts on its own.
- A readable list that contradicts a "fragrance-free" claim fails the product, whatever the front of the pack says.
- "Unscented" is never treated as fragrance-free.

What we leave out

We name no prices. Where a record carries a rough price band, we print it: $ is under 15 US dollars for the item as sold, $$ is 15 to 40, $$$ is 40 to 100. A band is a rough guide only, and it is blank where the record has none.

We leave out anything with drug labelling: a sun-protection or SPF claim, a Drug Facts panel, a claimed antiperspirant or antibacterial active ingredient, or an anti-dandruff active. The FDA says whether something is a cosmetic or a drug depends on its intended use, and that products carrying both kinds of claim must meet both sets of rules. On those products the

inactive-ingredients line is only part of the label, so checking it for fragrance answers only one question. That is a health-adjacent decision, so ask a pharmacist or clinician before swapping fluoride toothpaste, antiperspirant, antibacterial soap or sunscreen.

How to read an ingredient list

Why the front of the pack is not enough

- "**Unscented**" typically means no noticeable smell. The FDA says even some products labelled unscented may contain fragrance ingredients, because a maker can add just enough to mask the smell of other ingredients. The agency says "some", not "most", and we found no figure for how common it is.
- "**Fragrance-free**" is the maker's statement. No agency pre-approves it. The FDA says it has no list of approved or accepted claims for cosmetics.
- "**Hypoallergenic**" has no Federal definition. The FDA says it means whatever a company wants it to mean. It is not a fragrance statement either way.
- "**Natural**", "**botanical**" and "**herbal**" describe where an ingredient came from. DermNet says products listing these words may contain an unidentified fragrance, and that a fragrance can be made from a natural extract or synthesised. A natural fragrance is still a fragrance.
- "**Sensitive skin**" and "**gentle**" are marketing wording. They are not an ingredient finding.

Read a label in 5 steps

1. **Find the full list for your exact product.** Use the pack in your hand or the maker's published list. A front label, tagline or web blurb is not a list. Check the size and scent, because a maker can publish one list under one name while another size or scent differs.
2. **Read every line, not just the top.** Fragrance can sit anywhere. Under US rules, ingredients above 1 percent are listed in descending order, but a maker may list the 1-percent-or-less group in any order. EU rules say the same about ingredients under 1 percent. Position tells you little about how much is there.
3. **Scan for the flag words.** Fragrance, Parfum, Aroma, Perfume, and essential oils named as ingredients (often under plant names such as Lavandula angustifolia oil).
4. **Treat the claims as claims.** If a flag word is in the list, the product does not pass this test, whatever the front says. If the list is missing, unreadable or does not match your size, treat the product as unchecked.
5. **Note the date and recheck on the next purchase.** Formulas change. The list you read last time may not match the pack you buy next time.

What the words mean in each region

Where	The word on the label	What the source text says
United States	Fragrance	Under US regulations, fragrance and flavor ingredients can be listed simply as "Fragrance" or "Flavor". One word can stand for several ingredients. The FDA says fragrance formulas are complex mixtures of natural and synthetic chemicals, and that the labelling law cannot be used to force a company to reveal trade secrets.
European Union	Parfum or Aroma	Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 says perfume and aromatic compositions and their raw materials are referred to by the terms "parfum" or "aroma".

A product sold in both places can carry either word. On our test, all of Fragrance, Parfum and Aroma are flags.

Named allergens after Parfum

EU rules also require certain fragrance allergens to be named on the list in addition to the word Parfum or Aroma. A 2023 EU regulation extends individual labelling to further allergens above stated concentrations (0.001 percent in leave-on products and 0.01 percent in rinse-off products), with transition periods. So an EU-style list can read "Parfum" followed by chemical names. Our site's pages on allergen names cover seven that often come up: citronellol, geraniol, coumarin, eugenol, benzyl salicylate, hexyl cinnamal and benzyl alcohol, plus the pages on linalool and limonene. The point for a shopper is practical. A named chemical beside Parfum does not make a product fragrance-free. And the sources we read do not tell you what role any one name plays in a given product, so look it up on the maker's page rather than assuming.

The official glossary names

The EU glossary of common ingredient names (Commission Decision (EU) 2019/701) lists exact entries for PARFUM (entry 16644), AROMA (entry 2205) and FRAGRANCE (entry 9295). We looked up exact names only, and found no exact entry for PERFUME or for ESSENTIAL OIL. A few plant-oil names you may meet: LAVANDULA ANGUSTIFOLIA OIL (13204, lavender oil) and MELALEUCA ALTERNIFOLIA LEAF OIL (14026, tea tree oil). Two components of lavender oil also have entries: LINALOOL (13416) and LINALYL ACETATE (13420). A glossary entry tells you what a name is called. It does not say whether the substance counts as fragrance.

Essential oils

We looked for a regulator, allergy society or dermatology society that says essential oils count as fragrance, and found no such statement. The FDA says there is no regulatory definition of "essential oils" and that the law treats ingredients from plants the same as those from any other source. DermNet describes perfume as made from fragrant essential oils or synthetic aromatic compounds. A 2016 observational study found that 2.8 percent of patients already being patch-tested for suspected contact dermatitis reacted to oxidized lavender oil. That population is not the general public.

So the rule here is an editorial one: a list that includes essential oils is not called fragrance-free on this site.

What a fragrance-free list will still contain

Fragrance-free does not mean ingredient-free. Cleaning products and soaps carry surfactants (the cleaning agents) and usually a preservative. For example, the maker list for Seventh Generation Dish Soap Free & Clear includes the preservatives benzisothiazolinone and methylisothiazolinone, while its foaming dish spray lists phenoxyethanol. If you are avoiding a particular preservative as well, read for that too. Our site has separate pages on phenoxyethanol, methylisothiazolinone, parabens and sodium benzoate. We report what makers list. We do not rank them.

Bathroom and body care

What to look for

A bathroom has more routes for fragrance than most rooms: soap, body wash, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, lotion, shaving products, toothpaste, toilet paper and cleaners. The FDA says fragrance ingredients are commonly used in shampoos, shower gels, shaving creams and body lotions. The method is the same for every item. Find the maker's list for the exact size and scent, read it through, and set the front-of-pack words aside.

Order of attack, which is our own judgement and not a ranking from any source: start with what stays on your skin longest (lotion, deodorant) or covers the most of it (body wash, soap), then shampoo, then the rest.

What "unscented" and other claims do and do not tell you

Claim on the pack	What it tells you	What it does not tell you
Unscented	The maker says there is no noticeable smell.	Whether a masking fragrance is in the list.
Fragrance-free	The maker's own statement.	That anyone checked it; the list is the evidence.
For sensitive skin / dermatologist-recommended	Marketing wording.	Anything about fragrance.
Hypoallergenic	A claim with no Federal definition.	Whether fragrance is absent.
Natural or botanical	The origin the maker chose to describe.	Whether a fragrance or essential oil is present.

Two limits on how products can be read. Deodorants that are also antiperspirants are cosmetic/drug products under the FDA's description, and toothpaste with fluoride is a drug. We name no antiperspirant, toothpaste, dandruff shampoo or antibacterial soap, and the deodorants below are the aluminum-free kind from the record. A pharmacist or clinician is the person to ask about those categories.

Verified products by category

Each line gives the evidence level and the date the maker's list was read. All are "maker list, read" unless the line says otherwise. Bands are from the records.

Body wash and cleansers

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Dove Ultra Sensitive Serum Body Wash With 10 Ingredients	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
Aveeno Skin Relief Body Wash, Fragrance Free	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
Vanicream Gentle Body Wash	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser, Face and Body	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given

The Cetaphil page shows several sizes (2 oz to 16 oz) and our record does not match the list to a particular size, so check your size.

Bar soap

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Dove Sensitive Skin Beauty Bar	maker list read	14 November 2026	$
Dr. Bronner's Unscented Pure-Castile Magic Bar Soap	maker list read	13 November 2026	$$
Vanicream Cleansing Bar	maker list read	14 November 2026	$$$

Shampoo

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Vanicream Shampoo	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given
CeraVe Gentle Hydrating Shampoo	maker list read	11 November 2026	$
ATTITUDE Extra-gentle Shampoo	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given

Deodorant (no antiperspirant)

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Vanicream Aluminum-Free Gel Deodorant	maker list read	11 November 2026	$
Each & Every Natural Deodorant	maker list read	11 November 2026	$$

The two deodorants differ in format. The Each & Every list is a wax-and-oil base and the Vanicream list is water-based. That tells you the format, not how either performs.

Lotion

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Vanicream Moisturizing Lotion	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
Dove Fragrance Free Moisture Hypoallergenic Lotion	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
CeraVe Daily Moisturizing Lotion	maker list read	11 November 2026	$$
Cetaphil Daily Hydrating Lotion	maker list read	13 November 2026	$

Our pages on lotion, hand cream, moisturiser and cleanser cover more products and the caveats for each.

A short checklist for the bathroom

- Read the list on each product, one category at a time, instead of swapping everything in a day.
- Check shaving products, bubble bath, scrubs, toilet paper, wipes and period products too. We name no products for these, because the site holds no verified record.
- If a pack carries a Drug Facts panel, read the whole label and ask a pharmacist.

Laundry and cleaning

What to look for

Laundry is where "free and clear" and "free and gentle" names appear beside scented lines from the same brand. One brand can sell both, so confirm that the page you read is for the exact product name, scent and size in your hand.

For laundry and cleaning products, the cosmetic rules the FDA pages describe do not govern the label. We did not find a regulator page in our reading that says how laundry or cleaning labels must be worded, so we make no claim on that. The practical rule survives: read the maker's published list.

EPA's criteria document for its fragrance-free notation states the difference in one line. "Unscented" generally means fragrance materials are not used to give a scent, but a product may contain chemicals that neutralize or mask the odors of other ingredients. "Fragrance-free" means neither fragrance materials nor masking scents are used. EPA adds that products meeting the notation may still have an odor, because ingredients such as surfactants or solvents carry one.

What "unscented" and other claims do and do not tell you

- "**Unscented**" can be a masking claim, as above.
- "**Green**", "**plant-based**" and "**natural**" say nothing reliable about fragrance. A 2022 study in Indoor Air measured airborne compounds while 50 women cleaned their own homes with conventional or "green" products. Its abstract reports that using "green" all-purpose cleaners was associated with increases in air concentrations of some fragrance chemicals of concern. It is a small study of specific compounds and it does not single out any one product, but it supports checking the list over trusting a word.
- "**Hypoallergenic**" **or** "**for sensitive skin**" are separate claims from fragrance-free.
- **A certification mark** reflects that programme's rules, not yours. For example, the National Eczema Association's application page says a product submitted for its Seal "must be fragrance free", and NEA says its Seal means the product is free from ingredients on its own list of known eczema triggers. We did not find that list, and we could not compare NEA's fragrance criterion with ours. A mark is not a regulator's approval.

Where to start

Our order, which is a judgement based on how often you handle or breathe the product and not a regulatory or medical ranking: dish soap and dishwasher detergent, laundry, hand soap, floors, toilets and bathrooms, and small items that add scent such as trash bags. Ventilate when you clean.

If you want a reason, there is survey evidence about how common the experience is, with limits. In a 2016 nationally representative online survey (1,136 US adults), 34.7 percent reported health problems such as migraine or respiratory difficulty when exposed to fragranced products. In a 2018 survey, 64.3 percent of respondents reporting asthma or an asthma-like condition reported adverse effects from fragranced products. These are self-reports. They cannot show which ingredient is responsible and they are not diagnoses. If you manage asthma or any other condition, ask a clinician about triggers.

Laundry detergent: verified products

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Arm & Hammer Sensitive Skin Free & Clear Liquid Laundry Detergent	maker list read	11 November 2026	$
Tide Free & Gentle Liquid Laundry Detergent	maker list read	11 November 2026	$$
ECOS Hypoallergenic Free & Clear Liquid Laundry Detergent	maker list read	11 November 2026	$$
Seventh Generation Free & Clear Liquid Laundry Detergent (90 fl oz page)	maker list read	11 November 2026	none given
Charlie's Soap Fragrance Free Laundry Powder	maker list read	11 November 2026	$$

The Tide record rests on the maker's SmartLabel page. A SmartLabel page can show a heading such as "Fragrance Ingredient" with no entries under it and the value "undefined". That is an empty heading, not a listed ingredient, and it is not the same as a fragrance entry.

Switching the laundry routine

1. **List everything that goes in the wash.** Detergent, softener, dryer sheets, boosters and scent beads are separate products with separate lists.
2. **Replace the detergent first,** using the maker's list for the exact product.
3. **Replace the drying step** (see the Bedroom and textiles chapter).
4. **Drop scent beads unless the list shows no fragrance.** A review in the Journal of Controlled Release (2022) says fragrances and essential oils are encapsulated to slow evaporation and extend release. A 2024 abstract by authors at a fragrance supplier says fragrance encapsulates are widely used in fabric softeners and other liquid laundry products. The capsule is a delivery system, so a product using encapsulated fragrance is still scented. We could not establish how a capsule shows up on a laundry label.
5. **Expect some smell.** A fragrance-free product can still smell of its other ingredients.

What the residue evidence says

A 2025 letter in Acta Dermatovenerologica Croatica (an abstract, summarising older studies) reports that the mere presence of an allergen in a product is usually not enough to name it as the cause of a skin reaction. Concentration, method of application and the residue left on clothes after washing must also be considered. In a patch test of 36 people previously sensitised to fragrance, only 2 had a mildly positive reaction, and only at concentrations 20 times higher than the fragrance residue on clothing after washing. The letter concludes that residual concentrations on machine-washed clothes are not clinically significant, even in very sensitive people. Read that narrowly. It concerns detergent washed in a standard way. It says nothing about softener, dryer sheets or scent beads, which are designed to leave something on fabric. We read it as an abstract only. It supports "detergent residue was small in these studies", not "scented laundry products cannot matter".

Cleaning products beyond the wash

Floor cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner and similar products are covered on the site's pages for those categories. We name no products for them because the site holds no verified record. For those, apply the same five steps, and ask the maker for its ingredient disclosure if the pack carries none.

Kitchen and hands

What to look for

Dish soap, dishwasher detergent and hand soap are daily-use items, so they are worth checking early. They are not cosmetics in the case of dish soap and dishwasher products, so the FDA's cosmetic fragrance rules do not govern them. We use the FDA's cosmetic pages for one point that carries over, that "unscented" can hide a masking fragrance, and we read the maker's list for the rest.

What to look for on the list:

- Parfum, fragrance, aroma, perfume, plant oils and named fragrance chemicals.
- A "free of dyes" line is a separate claim from "free of fragrance".
- Preservatives, surfactants and colours are not fragrance. They appear in fragrance-free products, so read for any other ingredient you want to avoid.
- Brands sell scented and plain versions under similar names. Open the page for the plain option.

What "unscented" and other claims do and do not tell you

- "**Unscented" on a hand soap or dish soap** is a statement about smell. Compare it with the list.
- "**Free and clear**" is a brand phrase, not a standard. Brands can sell scented and plain versions under similar names, so read the list for the exact product.
- "**Antibacterial**" on a soap puts it under drug rules. An FDA consumer update says a Drug Facts label on a soap or body wash is a sign the product contains antibacterial ingredients. We name no antibacterial soap or hand sanitizer.

Verified products by category

Hand soap

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
ATTITUDE Extra Gentle Hand Soap, Sensitive skin, Unscented	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given
ECOS Hypoallergenic Hand Soap, Free & Clear Refill	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given
Seventh Generation Hand Wash, Free & Clean	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given
Vanicream Liquid Cleanser	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
Dr. Bronner's Unscented Pure-Castile Magic Soap (liquid)	maker list, browser capture	12 November 2026	$$

Hand cream

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Vanicream Moisturizing Cream	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
Cetaphil Intensive Moisturizing Cream for Dry Skin	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given

Dish soap

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Seventh Generation Dish Soap, Free & Clear (19 fl oz page)	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
ECOS Dish Soap, Free & Clear	maker list read	13 November 2026	$$$
Palmolive Ultra Pure + Clear Liquid Dish Soap, Fragrance Free	maker list, browser capture	12 November 2026	$
Dawn Free & Clear EZ-Squeeze Dish Soap, Unscented	maker list, browser capture	12 November 2026	$

Dishwasher detergent

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
ECOS Dishwasher Gel, Free & Clear	maker list read	13 November 2026	$
Seventh Generation Dishwasher Detergent Powder, Free & Clear	maker list read	13 November 2026	$$
Cascade Free & Clear Gel Dishwasher Detergent, Unscented, 60 fl oz	maker list, browser capture	13 November 2026	none given

The Dawn, Palmolive and Cascade lists are SmartLabel or maker-page captures made in a browser after our automated fetch was blocked.

Trash bags (maker states unscented)

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Seventh Generation Extra Strong Tall Kitchen Drawstring Trash Bags, 13 gallon	maker states unscented	13 November 2026	none given
Glad ForceFlex Medium Quick-Tie Trash Bags (Unscented option)	maker states unscented	13 November 2026	none given

A trash bag has no ingredient list. We captured each maker's page in a browser, then re-fetched it and confirmed the "unscented" wording appears. That is the maker's statement, not our finding that the bag has no added fragrance, so we do not call either bag fragrance-free. To check a bag yourself: find the scent selector and read the plain option, ask the maker whether the bag has any added fragrance, masking agent or odor-control additive, and do not read a lack of smell on arrival as evidence.

Bedroom and textiles

What to look for

The sources behind this guide are strongest on what goes into the wash, and thinner on bedding as a product. The site holds no verified record for sheets, pillows, mattresses or candles, so this chapter is about the laundry that reaches your bed and about the routine around it. It names no bedding products.

Scent in a load can come from more than the detergent. The drying step matters: dryer sheets and fabric softeners are the products that exist to leave something on fabric.

What "unscented" and other claims do and do not tell you

- "Gentle on skin" and "hypoallergenic" on a softener or dryer sheet are the maker's words. We use them only as quotes.
- "Free & Gentle", "Free & Clear" and "Scent-free" are phrases to check against the list, not results.
- A certification mark such as the National Eczema Association Seal reflects that programme's rules. See the Laundry chapter.

What two dryer sheet lists look like

Both dryer-sheet lists we read have two parts: what the sheet is made of and the softening agents on it.

- **Bounce Free & Gentle, 160 count.** The SmartLabel page, captured in a browser on 13 November 2026, lists a polyester sheet, dialkylester dimethyl ammonium methosulfate, fatty acids (C16-18 and C18 unsaturated) and bentonite. The page also shows an empty "Fragrance Ingredient" heading with the value "undefined". That is an empty heading, not a listed ingredient.
- **Seventh Generation Free & Clear, 80 count.** The maker's page, read on 13 November 2026, lists three softener entries and a rayon sheet, with the maker describing the entries as plant-derived or plant-based. We have not assessed those descriptions.

The shared pattern is a sheet, a quaternary-ammonium-type softener (names ending "methosulfate" or "methyl sulfates") and fatty acids. We found no source explaining what each entry does or how much is present, since lists give names and not amounts.

Verified products: softeners and dryer sheets

Product	Evidence	Date read	Band
Bounce Free & Gentle Dryer Sheets, 160 count	maker list, browser capture	13 November 2026	none given
Seventh Generation Fabric Softener Sheets, Free & Clear	maker list read	13 November 2026	none given
Seventh Generation Liquid Fabric Softener, Free & Clear	maker list read	13 November 2026	$$$
Downy Free & Gentle Fabric Softener	maker list, browser capture	13 November 2026	$

For laundry detergents, see the Laundry chapter. The same detergent list applies to sheets, pillowcases and towels.

A routine for bedding and a baby's clothes

1. **Wash new textiles before use.** HealthyChildren.org, the American Academy of Pediatrics parent site, says it is generally a good idea to wash all clothes before using them. Its page was last updated in 2009, so newer wording may differ.
2. **Use no more detergent than you need.** Eczema Care Online, a UK resource for families of children with eczema, says it is often possible to use much less washing powder or liquid than the label suggests, leaving less product on clothes. It adds that there is not much scientific evidence that non-biological products or liquids are better than powders.
3. **Leave out fabric softener for a child with eczema.** The same UK page advises trying not to use it on the child's washing, because it contains things that can cause an eczema flare-up.
4. **For a baby with signs of irritation,** the AAP page says to consider a milder "baby", hypoallergenic or fragrance-free detergent. It does not recommend fragrance-free for every newborn, so going fragrance-free from the start is a precaution beyond what that page asks. Ask a pediatrician about a rash.
5. **Rinse thoroughly.**

None of these sources says laundry causes or prevents any condition.

Away from home

Plain Label Guide has pages on hotel rooms, hospital bags, workplace policy and travel toiletries. The one hotel policy we read, from Scandic Hotels Group in 2019, promised fragrance-free, hypoallergenic toiletries approved by the Swedish Asthma and Allergy Association. It names that body as approving the toiletries only, and it is a 2019 statement from one company. Treat any "allergy-friendly" listing as the hotel's own wording, and ask these before you book:

- Are the in-room soap, shampoo and body wash fragrance-free, and can you send the ingredient list?
- Does the hotel use air fresheners, diffusers or scented lobby systems, and where?
- Which products clean the room and wash the linen?
- Can the hotel confirm in writing what it will do for your stay?

Sources, and the limits of this guide

When your list differs from ours

Formulations change, makers add variants, and one product name can cover several sizes and scents. Every list in this guide was read on a particular date, given in the tables. If the list on your pack differs from what we record, trust the pack in your hand and apply the five steps again. If you cannot read the pack, or it disagrees with the maker's web page, treat the product as unchecked. A product that is not listed in this guide has simply not been verified here; that is not a finding against it.

Limits

- This guide is built from documents only: maker pages, regulator texts, certifier pages and published abstracts. We have not tested, smelled or used any product.
- A maker's list is the maker's own statement. We read it; we cannot confirm what is in a bottle.
- We read excerpts and abstracts, not whole regulations and papers. Where an excerpt is silent, we say nothing.
- We found no definition of "fragrance-free" or "unscented" in the FDA pages we read, and no source on how laundry or cleaning labels must be worded.

- We found no source measuring fragrance carry-over from dryer sheets, softener or scent beads, or how many washes clear scent from a machine.
- The fragrance-free test is ours. It is an editorial rule, not a regulation and not a medical standard.
- Nothing here is medical advice. For a reaction, a rash, asthma or any diagnosis, ask a clinician, or look to an allergy or dermatology society.

Pages on Plain Label Guide relied on

The guide draws on these pages, which carry the full citations. All are published at plainlabelguide.com.

Topic	Page title
Definitions	What "fragrance-free" means here; Fragrance-free products; Fragrance-free vs unscented
Label reading	How to read an ingredient list for fragrance, parfum and aroma; What is parfum; What is natural fragrance; Are essential oils fragrance-free; Fragrance allergen names on ingredient labels
Rooms	Fragrance-free bathroom; Fragrance-free cleaning products; How to switch to fragrance-free laundry; Fragrance-free laundry for a newborn; Fragrance-free hotel room; Laundry scent beads and microcapsules; What is in dryer sheets
Roundups	Fragrance-free body wash, soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, hand soap, hand cream, dish soap, dishwasher detergent, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, and unscented trash bags
Marks and exclusions	National Eczema Association Seal of Acceptance; Why drug-labelled products are excluded

External sources named in this guide

Regulators and standards

- FDA, Fragrances in Cosmetics: https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics/cosmetic-ingredients/fragrances-cosmetics
- FDA, Cosmetics Labeling Claims: https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics/cosmetics-labeling/cosmetics-labeling-claims
- FDA, "Hypoallergenic" Cosmetics: https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics/cosmetics-labeling-claims/hypoallergenic-cosmetics
- FDA, Disposable Wipes: https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics/cosmetic-products/disposable-wipes
- FDA, Is It a Cosmetic, a Drug, or Both? (Or Is It Soap?): https://www.fda.gov/cosmetics/cosmetics-laws-regulations/it-cosmetic-drug-or-both-or-it-soap
- 21 CFR 701.3, Designation of ingredients: https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-21/chapter-I/subchapter-G/part-701/subpart-A/section-701.3
- Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009R1223
- Regulation (EU) 2023/1545: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023R1545
- Commission Decision (EU) 2019/701 (glossary of common ingredient names): https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019D0701
- US EPA, fragrance-free criteria document: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-02/documents/fragrance-free_criteria.pdf

Professional and certifier pages

- DermNet, Fragrance allergy: https://dermnetnz.org/topics/fragrance-allergy
- DermNet, Fragrances and perfumes: https://dermnetnz.org/topics/fragrances-and-perfumes
- DermNet, Allergic contact dermatitis to essential oils: https://dermnetnz.org/topics/allergic-contact-dermatitis-to-essential-oils
- National Eczema Association, About the Seal of Acceptance: https://nationaleczema.org/product-directory/about-nea-seal-of-acceptance/
- National Eczema Association, Apply for the Seal of Acceptance: https://nationaleczema.org/get-the-seal/
- HealthyChildren.org (AAP), Cleaning Baby Clothes: https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/diapers-clothing/Pages/Cleaning-Baby-Clothes.aspx
- Eczema Care Online, Bathing, showering and washing clothes: https://www.eczemacareonline.org.uk/en/library/my-child/bathing-showering-and-washing-clothes-my-child
- Scandic Hotels Group, press release of 13 May 2019: https://www.scandichotelsgroup.com/media/press-releases/2019/scandic-hotels-introduces-standard-for-allergy-friendly-rooms/

Studies (PubMed abstracts)

- Hypersensitivity reaction to detergents (Acta Dermatovenerologica Croatica, 2025, PMID 41178659): https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/41178659/

- Stimulus responsive microcapsules and their aromatic applications (J Control Release, 2022, PMID 36122896): https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36122896/
- Fragrance encapsulates and biodegradability testing (Environ Toxicol Chem, 2024, PMID 38557972): https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38557972/
- Cleaning product study (Indoor Air, 2022, PMID 36437676) and the 2016 and 2018 fragranced-product surveys (PMID 27867426, PMID 29391919), as summarised on the site's cleaning-products page.

Maker pages read for the products named

Product	Maker page
Dove Ultra Sensitive Serum Body Wash	https://www.dove.com/us/en/p/ultra-sensitive-serum-body-wash-with-only-10-ingredients.html/00011111049444
Aveeno Skin Relief Body Wash	https://www.aveeno.com/products/skin-relief-unscented-body-wash-for-sensitive-skin
Vanicream Gentle Body Wash	https://www.vanicream.com/product/vanicream-body-wash
Cetaphil Gentle Skin Cleanser	https://www.cetaphil.com/us/products/product-categories/all-cleansers/cetaphil-gentle-skin-cleanser/302990110227.html
Dove Sensitive Skin Beauty Bar	https://www.dove.com/us/en/p/sensitive-skin-beauty-bar.html/00011111611641
Dr. Bronner's bar soap	https://www.drbronner.com/products/baby-unscented-pure-castile-bar-soap
Dr. Bronner's liquid soap	https://www.drbronner.com/products/baby-unscented-pure-castile-liquid-soap
Vanicream Cleansing Bar	https://www.vanicream.com/product/vanicream-cleansing-bar
Vanicream Shampoo	https://www.vanicream.com/product/free-and-clear-shampoo
CeraVe Gentle Hydrating Shampoo	https://www.cerave.com/haircare/shampoo/gentle-hydrating-shampoo
ATTITUDE Extra-gentle Shampoo	https://attitudeliving.com/products/extra-gentle-shampoo
Vanicream Aluminum-Free Gel Deodorant	https://www.vanicream.com/product/vanicream-aluminum-free-deodorant
Each & Every Natural Deodorant	https://eachandevery.com/products/nothing-on
Vanicream Moisturizing Lotion	https://www.vanicream.com/product/vanicream-moisturizing-lotion
Dove Fragrance Free Moisture Lotion	https://www.dove.com/us/en/p/fragrance-free-moisture-hypoallergenic-lotion.html/00011111637948
CeraVe Daily Moisturizing Lotion	https://www.cerave.com/skincare/moisturizers/daily-moisturizing-lotion
Cetaphil Daily Hydrating Lotion	https://www.cetaphil.com/us/products/product-categories/all-moisturizers/daily-hydrating-lotion/302993889038.html
ATTITUDE Extra Gentle Hand Soap	https://attitudeliving.com/products/sensitive-skin-hand-soap-unscented
Seventh Generation Hand Wash	https://www.seventhgeneration.com/hand-wash-free-clean-unscented
ECOS Hypoallergenic Hand Soap	https://www.ecos.com/hand-soap/hypoallergenic-hand-soap-free-clear-refill/
Vanicream Liquid Cleanser	https://www.vanicream.com/product/free-and-clear-liquid-cleanser
Vanicream Moisturizing Cream	https://www.vanicream.com/product/vanicream-moisturizing-cream
Cetaphil Intensive Moisturizing Cream	https://www.cetaphil.com/us/products/product-categories/all-moisturizers/moisturizing-cream/302993917564.html
Seventh Generation Dish Soap	https://www.seventhgeneration.com/dish-liquid-free-clear-19-fl-oz
ECOS Dish Soap	https://www.ecos.com/dishwashing/dish-soap-free-clear/
Palmolive Ultra Pure + Clear	https://www.palmolive.com/en-us/products/liquid-dish-soap/ultra-pure-clear-fragrancefree
Dawn Free & Clear EZ-Squeeze	https://dawn-dish.com/en-us/products/dawn-free-clear-ez-squeeze-dish-soap-unscented/
ECOS Dishwasher Gel	https://www.ecos.com/dishwashing/dishwasher-gel-free-clear/
Seventh Generation Dishwasher Powder	https://www.seventhgeneration.com/dishwasher-powder-detergent
Cascade Free & Clear Gel	https://smartlabel.pg.com/00037000539773.html
Seventh Generation trash bags	https://www.seventhgeneration.com/strong-kitchen-trash-bags-drawstring

Product	Maker page
Glad ForceFlex Quick-Tie (Unscented)	https://www.glad.com/products/small-and-medium-bags/quick-tie/unscented/8/
Arm & Hammer Sensitive Skin Free & Clear	https://churchdwight.com/ingredient-disclosure/laundry-fabric-care/42015525-ah-laundry-detergent-perfume-and-dye-free.aspx
Tide Free & Gentle	https://smartlabel.pg.com/00030772121412.html
Seventh Generation Free & Clear laundry	https://www.seventhgeneration.com/liquid-laundry-detergent-free-clear
ECOS Hypoallergenic Free & Clear laundry	https://www.ecos.com/laundry/hypoallergenic-laundry-detergent-free-clear/
Charlie's Soap Laundry Powder	https://www.charliesoap.com/product/natural-laundry-powder-detergent/
Bounce Free & Gentle	https://smartlabel.pg.com/00037000834427.html
Seventh Generation dryer sheets	https://www.seventhgeneration.com/dryer-sheets-fabric-softener-free-clear
Seventh Generation liquid softener	https://www.seventhgeneration.com/liquid-fabric-softener-free-clear
Downy Free & Gentle	https://smartlabel.pg.com/00030772100486.html

Where to go next

Plain Label Guide (plainlabelguide.com) has a page for each category in this guide. Start with "How to read an ingredient list for fragrance, parfum and aroma" and "What 'fragrance-free' means here", then pick the roundup for the room you are working on, such as "Fragrance-free laundry detergent" or "Fragrance-free dish soap". Each shows the evidence level and date behind every product, so you can see exactly what was read and when.