

Odour and your health

'Odour annoyance' is the term that health professionals use for smells that are unpleasant, strong, or long lasting enough to interfere with daily life. At the levels which cause odour annoyance, the smells are not toxic and do not cause cancer or other long-term issues such as fertility or pregnancy problems. These smells can still affect your health and how you feel.

Symptoms can vary

The most common symptoms people experienced affected their breathing, ears, nose, throat, nerves, stomach, skin and mental health. For example:

- headaches
- nausea
- dizziness
- watery eyes
- runny nose
- irritated throat
- coughing or wheezing (especially in people with asthma or allergies)
- rashes, itchy skin, dryness/flaking skin
- sleep problems
- increased stress.

Some people are more affected by odour

For example:

- children
- people with asthma, allergies, or chronic lung problems
- people with migraines
- people with anxiety or depression.

Odour can cause stress-related health effects

Odour annoyance can cause stress, similar to constant noise or other disturbances. Stress can affect both your emotions and your body.

Repetitive or ongoing stress can worsen health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and breathing issues.

Odour can disrupt daily routines

Social impacts include:

- not inviting visitors to your home
- missing out on socialising.

Lifestyle impacts include:

- avoiding outdoor activities
- enjoying your home and neighbourhood less.

Medical help is available

- If you are experiencing symptoms due to odour, please speak to your GP.
- You can also call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) for 24/7 confidential advice from a registered nurse.
- Visit the Queensland Government website and search 'mental health and wellbeing' for more information on mental health support (www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health-and-wellbeing).
- Ipswich Medicare Mental Health Centre, formerly known as Ipswich Head to Health, is a free, federally funded service for adult mental health care. You can walk in without an appointment and you don't need a referral.
- In an emergency, call triple zero (000).



Visit www.health.qld.gov.au/swanbank-inquiry for further information.

**DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND**



**Queensland
Government**