

eau de toilette

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Eau de Toilette

Conventionally **5–15%** aromatic compounds in alcohol. EdT was the mainstream concentration for most of the twentieth century, it has been displaced commercially by [Eau de Parfum](#), and it remains the better choice for a specific and underrated set of circumstances.

Where the name comes from

Eau de toilette is not a euphemism. The French *toilette* means the whole process of washing and grooming — the "toilet table" of an English dressing room — and an eau de toilette was the fragrant water used as part of it. The word only acquired its other meaning in English later.

The case for EdT

- **Heat.** In hot weather a heavy EdP projects far more than intended, because warmth accelerates evaporation. An EdT's lighter load stays proportionate.
- **Offices, transport, restaurants and clinical settings**, where a fragrance that fills a room is a genuine imposition on other people.

- **Fresh, citrus and aromatic compositions** are often *better* as EdTs. Those materials are volatile by nature, and concentrating them does not extend them — it makes the opening louder and can turn a bright accord sharp.
- **Reapplication as a feature.** A fragrance that fades in three hours can be reapplied to suit the day, which a twelve-hour EdP cannot.
- **Price.**

Not just a diluted EdP

An EdT and an EdP of the same name are usually different compositions, not the same concentrate at different strengths. The typical pattern: the EdT carries more of the bright top and heart materials and opens more vividly; the EdP carries more base — amber, musk, resin, vanilla — and lasts longer but opens quieter.

That means the EdT is sometimes the better-smelling version, particularly in citrus, green, fougère and aquatic families. Test both rather than assuming stronger is better.

Longevity, and what actually drives it

Concentration matters less than people think:

- **Material volatility dominates.** Citrus flashes off in an hour; musks and resins last a day.
- **Skin condition matters more than the label.** Dry skin holds fragrance badly; applying over a fragrance-free moisturiser is the cheapest longevity improvement available.
- **Spray, do not rub** — rubbing crushes the top notes, which are the whole point of an EdT.

Where it sits in the rules

Cosmetic in the US — FDA primary category **(05) fragrance preparations** — with **no premarket approval**. Under **21 CFR 701.3** the fragrance composition may be declared simply as "fragrance", and accepted trade-secret ingredients may hide behind "and other ingredients", so a US label discloses very little.

In the EU, **named fragrance allergens must be declared individually** above threshold, and **Regulation (EU) 2023/1545 expanded that list from 26 substances to roughly 80** with transitions running to 2028. Prohibited substances are in Annex II (1,766 entries) and restricted ones in Annex III — the latter including limits on **oakmoss and treemoss** and on **phototoxic furocoumarins** in citrus oils.

IFRA Standards are industry self-regulation rather than law, and they set most of the working limits.

Alcohol-based fragrance is **flammable** and subject to transport restrictions.

Shelf life

Three to five years unopened; two to three after opening, and less for citrus-dominant EdTs, which are the most oxidation-prone products in this whole category — precisely the compositions the format suits best.

Keep the bottle boxed, cool, dark and upright. A darkened colour or a sour, varnish-like opening means it

has turned.

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- [Cosmetics](#) — what the label is legally allowed to say, and the full catalogue.
- The rest of *Concentrations* — [Perfume](#) · [Eau de Parfum](#) · [Eau de Cologne](#) · [Eau Fraîche](#).
- Regulatory statements here follow the FDA and EU sources listed on [Cosmetics](#), read 16 August 2026.