

It is best to check with the patient and their care team before sending lilies to someone with respiratory sensitivities. Their fragrance and pollen may be uncomfortable for some people, and a hospital or care facility may also restrict flowers.

## Why lilies may cause discomfort

Many lilies have a noticeable fragrance, especially indoors. A scent that one person enjoys may bother someone else, particularly in a small room where the air is shared and the flowers cannot easily be moved away.

Lilies also produce pollen on the anthers at the center of each flower. Pollen can stain fabric, and it may be a concern for a person who reacts to it. Removing the anthers can reduce loose pollen, but it does not remove the fragrance or guarantee that the flowers will be comfortable for the patient.

People differ in what affects them. A patient may already know that floral scents or pollen make them feel unwell. If you cannot ask them directly, a family member or caregiver may be able to help you choose.

## Check before arranging delivery

Hospital rules can vary by facility and unit. Some areas, including certain units caring for people at high risk of infection, may not permit fresh flowers or plants. Even where flowers are allowed, the patient might prefer a room without them.

1. Ask the patient or someone close to them if flowers and floral scents are comfortable.
2. Contact the facility or unit to confirm that flower deliveries are accepted for that room.

3. If flowers are welcome, ask which varieties the patient prefers and avoid lilies if there is any doubt about their scent or pollen.
4. If you cannot get a clear answer, choose a thoughtful gift that does not depend on fragrance or fresh flowers.

A quick check can also prevent a delivery from arriving at a time when the patient has moved rooms or is no longer at the facility.

## Consider a gentler gift

A card with a few sincere words can be just as welcome as a bouquet. You might also send a favorite magazine or a small book, provided the patient has the space and energy to enjoy it.

If you would like to give flowers later, ask about a time and place that feels comfortable for the recipient. An arrangement at home may be easier to place in another room or remove if its scent becomes bothersome. Still, it is worth asking first rather than assuming any flower will be suitable.

## Keep the patient at the center

There is no need to find a perfect substitute for lilies. The most useful choice is one that respects the patient's comfort and the rules of their care setting. If scent is a concern, avoid adding scented candles, sprays, or other fragranced items to your gift.

A simple note letting the patient know you are thinking of them can offer warmth without adding anything to their room that might make breathing less comfortable.

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