

A HEALTHY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Choosing Wise Alternatives to Risky Cleaning Products

In choosing the products that we use to clean our homes, we are faced with a variety of choices. There is a lot of hype about green, eco-friendly products. But does it really matter if we use those products, or is it just a marketing gimmick?

It is true that many common household cleaning products contain chemical compounds that are shown to produce adverse health affects. In addition, they can be dangerous to ecosystems and wildlife when then are disposed of, particularly when they get into rivers, streams, and lakes.

In many households, cleaning products are stored right under the kitchen sink. When you think about it, placing these toxic chemicals in close proximity to food does not seem very wise. Storing and using these products in your home, you run the risk of them later touching our food, your child's small fingers, and eventually contaminating the environment.

“BY WISDOM A HOUSE IS BUILT, AND THROUGH UNDERSTANDING IT IS ESTABLISHED.”

-Proverbs 24:3

is that we want household *cleaners* to do just that: *clean* – not cause damage to our selves, our families, and the earth.

Choosing healthy cleaning products is a simple way that we can take good care of the homes, families, and world that we have been blessed with.

WHERE IN THE WORLD DO YOU START?

There are a number of ways that you can start ridding your home of toxic cleaning products. Above all, make sure to avoid products with chemicals that are known to be harmful. These products can either be replaced with home-made solutions, or with manufactured products made with safe alternatives. The following information should help you learn about your options, and you can decide what best fits your life.

CHECK THE LABEL FOR WHAT TO AVOID. Below are six common toxic ingredients to avoid in cleaning products. Frighteningly, companies are not required to label their products with these ingredients, so rather than looking to see if these ingredients are listed on the label, look for products that include these in their “Does not contain” list.¹

INGREDIENT	USED AS...	HEALTH EFFECT	FOUND IN
Ammonia	Grease cutter	Asthma	All purpose cleaners
Monoethanolamine (MEA) and Diethanolamine (DEA)	Surfactants (help cleaners penetrate grime)	Asthma and irritate respiratory tracts	Laundry detergent, all purpose cleaner, floor cleaner
Glycol Ethers	Glass cleaners	Reduce fertility and sperm count	Glass cleaners
Alkylphenol Ethoxylates (APEs)	Surfactants	Hormone disrupter, cancer	Laundry detergent
Phthalates	Synthetic fragrances	Hormone disrupter	Fragrances in fabric softeners, glass cleaners
Triclosan	Antibacterial cleaner	Hormone disrupter	Liquid hand wash

All of these ingredients can be traced back as contributing to cancer as well as disturbing your nervous and hormonal systems. Hormone disrupters are known to have a greater affect on fetuses, infants, and young children.

GOOD TO KNOW...

The best antibacterial? A little bit of elbow grease. Antibacterial soaps can allow for resistant bacteria to continue to grow and multiply, so the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has advised against their use.

You can avoid having to use antibacterial soaps and solutions by making sure you scrub well, whether it is your hands or your countertop. Scrubbing with a natural, non-antibacterial soap will loosen the bacteria, which can then be rinsed away with warm water and will no longer be harmful.


¹ <http://www.simplesteps.org/labels/six-ingredients-avoid-cleaning-products>

MAKE SAFE ALTERNATIVES. Here are some common household products that can be used for cleaning solutions, what they can be used for, and where to find them.²

PRODUCT	USED TO...	PRACTICAL EXAMPLE	WHERE TO FIND IT
Baking soda	Clean, deodorize, water soften, scour	Clean toothbrush or hairbrush	Baking aisle
Unscented, non-antibacterial soap	Clean a huge range of materials and surfaces	Washing dishes	Detergent section
Lemon	Fight household bacteria	Rub on smelly cutting board	Produce aisle
Borax	Clean, deodorize, disinfect, water soften, clean floors, wallpaper, and printed walls	Alternative to bleach, boosts soaps, and removes stains	Detergent section
White vinegar	Cuts grease, removes mildew, odors, some stains, and wax build-up	Remove grease from clothes, towels, carpets, rugs	Condiments, salad dressings, vinegar aisle
Cornstarch	Clean windows, polish furniture, shampoo carpets and rugs	Soaks up smell; sprinkle on carpet, let sit for 30 minutes, and vacuum up	Baking aisle
Citrus solvent	Cleans paint brushes, oil and grease, some stains	Use instead of paint thinner, clean painting materials	Laundry aisle

Often, you don't need harsh chemicals to do a good job cleaning. You can use the items in the table above to make pretty much any kind of cleaning solution you could ever need. To make your own inexpensive, natural alternatives for cleaning, check out: eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm

PURCHASE SAFE ALTERNATIVES. If you would rather purchase safe, ready-made cleaners, there are a number of labels to look for when shopping for. These are a few who offer healthy, environmentally friendly cleaning products:

 Green Works

 Seventh Generation

 EcoConcepts

 Method

Taking care of the world we've been given begins with the small things that make your heart bigger. Be encouraged! Together, each of our small steps makes a big difference.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? E-mail abbey@restoringeden.org.



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² Eartheasy.com