



GREEN CLEAN

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OVERVIEW

More than 80,000 chemicals go unregulated by the federal government, including many used in common household cleaning products. With conventional cleaning, we are replacing dirt and grime with volatile organic compounds (VOC's), carcinogens, hormone disruptors, reproductive toxins, irritants and allergens.

Ingredient labels are mandatory for food, cosmetics, and drugs, but not cleaning products. Even if you know what to look for, manufacturers aren't required to disclose ingredients on cleaning product labels, making it nearly impossible for consumers to know what they're buying.

Conventional cleaning products harm the environment in a variety of ways. When VOC's such as ammonia evaporate, they contribute to indoor air pollution as well as smog outside. When we wash ingredients such as nitrogen and phosphorous down the drain, we flood waterways with unregulated levels of chemical nutrients, which can cause unsustainable growth in plant life, deplete the water's oxygen supply, kill fish and lead to birth defects in aquatic wildlife. Those same chemicals – which are unsafe even in very low doses – can also make their way into our drinking water.

In order for cleaning products to truly clean, they need to remove dirt and be non-toxic. Due to an informed and demanding public, more and more companies are making safer cleaning products with non-toxic ingredients, eco-friendly materials, and even biodegradable packaging! EWG has a whole database on this topic.

It's also easy (and economical!) to make your own cleaners from common household items such as baking soda, vinegar and lemon juice. Here are some recipes if you're ready to DIY!

LEARN MORE WITH THESE RESOURCES!

Project Green Challenge:

<http://www.projectgreenchallenge.com>

Infographic:

<https://brightnest-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/blog/uploads/2012/07/DIY-EcoFriendly-Cleaners-@BrightNest-Blog1.jpg>

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WvhB5hkljc>

Pinterest:

<https://www.pinterest.com/teensturngreen/clean/>

OVERVIEW

STEPS TO TAKE:

- Avoid products that don't fully disclose all ingredients
- Avoid "antibacterial" cleaners- these contain pesticides that kill bacteria, viruses, and molds
- Look for "fragrance free" rather than "unscented"
- Make your own
- Log onto the Environmental Working Group's Guide to Healthy Cleaning to access product ratings (based on safety and ingredient disclosure)
- Opt to support companies that use non-toxic ingredients, eco-friendly materials, and biodegradable packaging

MAIN CHEMICALS TO AVOID:

Butoxyethanol – causes sore throats when inhaled, contributes to pulmonary edema and severe liver and kidney damage. Used in: window, kitchen, and multipurpose cleaners. Alternative: Bon Ami powder or DIY with baking soda, vinegar and essential oils

Formaldehyde – VOC that may cause cancer and other harmful illnesses. Used in: household cleaners and disinfectants. Alternative: Dr. Bronner's Liquid Castile Soap

Chlorine – A respiratory irritant with chronic effects such as thyroid disrupter. Used in: scouring powders, toilet bowl cleaners, laundry whiteners, and tap water. Alternative: Bon Ami powder and tap water

Ammonia – Irritant that leads to chronic bronchitis and asthma, acts as a poisonous gas if mixed with bleach. Used in: polishing agents and glass cleaners. Alternative: Vodka on any metal and toothpaste on silver

Phthalates – Endocrine disruptors and suspected carcinogens, cause hormonal abnormalities, thyroid disorders, birth defects and reproductive problems. Used in: fragrance fresheners. Alternatives: essential oils or fragrance-free products

TERMS TO KNOW:

Carcinogens – Chemicals or toxins that cause cancer and/or promote cancer's growth

Endocrine Disruptors – Chemicals that mimic human hormones, confusing the body with false signals and are linked to reduced fertility, premature puberty, miscarriage, menstrual problems, challenged immune systems, abnormal prostate size, ADHD, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and certain cancers

Neurotoxins – Toxins that alter neurons, affecting brain activity and causing a range of mental problems from headaches to loss of intellect

Biodegradable – The chemical breakdown of materials by a physiological environment

Fume Fading – Loss of color in carpets due to atmospheric pollutants such as ozone and NO₂.

WHY CLEAN GREEN?

NON-TOXIC INGREDIENTS, ECO-FRIENDLY MATERIALS, AND BIODEGRADABLE PRODUCTS

not only do the job, but also minimize health and environmental impact. By choosing safe products and supporting brands with a focus on health and environment, you limit chemical exposure in both homes and classrooms. Protect your right to health!

17,000 | the number of petrochemicals available for home use, only 30 percent of which have been tested for safety related to human health and environmental exposures.

63 | the number of synthetic chemical products found in the average American home, translating to roughly 10 gallons of harmful chemicals.

100 | the number of times higher that indoor air pollution levels can be amplified above outdoor air pollution levels, according to US EPA estimates.

275 | the number of active ingredients in antimicrobials that the EPA classifies as pesticides, as they are designed to kill microbes. 5 billion: the number of pounds of chemicals that the institutional cleaning industry uses each year.

23 | the average number of gallons (equal to 87 liters) of chemicals that a janitor uses each year, 25 percent of which are hazardous.

A 10 STEP TO GREEN CLEAN

- 1** Acknowledge the importance of Green cleaning. Agree with the need for change before you can change.
- 2** Educate yourself with trustworthy resources such as: Environmental Working Group (ewg.org) Women's Voices for the Earth (womensvoices.org) Going Green with a Bronner Mom (lisa.drbronner.com)
- 3** Read ingredient lists. Buy from companies who fully disclose ingredients on their labels and whose ingredients don't pollute people and planet. Beware of red-flag ingredients such as "eths" (ie: sodium laureth sulfate) and "fragrance".
- 4** Pick a starting place and proceed one step at a time. Identify one simple change, and start there.
- 5** Use products you understand. Complicated is not better. Regular soap and water is extremely effective, as are vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice, and olive oil.
- 6** GIY: Green-It-Yourself. Make your own cleaning products. Save yourself the time, money, and effort of buying from the store. Store bought is not always better.
- 7** Multi-task your cleaners. Find a great all-purpose recipe and use it for sinks, counters, dishes, floors, indoor, outdoor, everywhere.
- 8** Discard old toxic cleaning products safely. Don't throw them in the garbage or pour them down gutters or storm drains. Bring toxic items to hazardous waste sites or recycling centers. Visit earthg11.com for a list of local disposal centers.
- 9** Reduce your refuse. Buy in bulk and buy concentrates to reduce throw-away packaging. Repurpose containers. Use washable cloths instead of paper towels.
- 10** Clean your air. Open windows daily. Bring in house plants. Use real foods to scent the air instead of candles, sprays, or plug in air fresheners.

STICK WITH IT. EVEN IF YOU STUMBLE OCCASIONALLY, KEEP GOING. YOU WILL EVENTUALLY DEVELOP NEW HABITS AND GET USED TO NEW NORMS.

GREEN CLEAN PLEDGE

WE PLEDGE TO

Use only products that are void of toxic ingredients and are not harmful to humans, all species and planet

Prohibit from our (classroom/dorm/school) any products that do not meet the highest standards for human and environmental health.

Spread the word about cleaning green to protect the health and well-being of everyone, especially our friends and families.

Create the greenest spaces we can and to learn about what that standard represents.

Name: _____

School: _____ Date: _____