

WHAT'S UNDER YOUR SINK?

POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF HOME CLEANING PRODUCTS



WHAT YOU CAN DO: 7 SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO TOXIC CHEMICALS FROM HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS

1. *Make your own non-toxic cleaning products.*

Simple and inexpensive ingredients like vinegar, baking soda and borax can be used in many different ways for effective cleaning. Of course, you can add lavender or other essential oils to safely get the fresh smell you are looking for! Visit www.womenandenvironment.org to link to our favorite recipes.

2. *Use less toxic products.*

- ❖ Avoid products marked "Danger" & "Poison," and reduce your use of products marked "Caution."
- ❖ Reduce your use of products containing Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), especially if you or someone in your home has asthma. Aerosol sprays, cleaners and disinfectants, moth repellents and air fresheners are likely to contain VOCs.
- ❖ Avoid chemicals that are linked to reproductive harm. Products that contain endocrine disrupting chemicals such as butoxyethanol and other glycol ethers include all-purpose cleaners, glass cleaners, tub/tile

cleaners, degreasers, carpet cleaners, stain removers, floor strippers and cleaners, metal polishes, and oven cleaners. Products that contain APEs are found primarily in laundry detergents, multi-purpose cleaners, floor care products and carpet cleaners, non-chlorine sanitizers, toilet bowl cleaners and deodorizers. Look for products that use alcohol ethoxylates (sometimes listed as ethoxylated alcohols) instead.

- ❖ Look for products that have been certified by an independent institution such as Green Seal.
- ❖ Use fewer products. An all-purpose cleaner can handle a lot of cleaning jobs around the house. It is not necessary to have a different product for each room (bathroom cleaner, kitchen cleaner, etc.).

3. *Buy products from manufacturers that disclose ingredients on the label.*

If a product does not include ingredients on the label, call the customer service number on the product and ask the company to disclose the ingredients.

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4. Encourage product manufacturers to replace toxic ingredients with safer alternatives.

Alternatives do exist for many of the chemicals of concern in cleaning products. If your favorite cleaning product contains a chemical of concern, call the manufacturer and let them know you would prefer they use an alternative chemical.

5. Never mix products.

Chemicals in cleaning products can have dangerous reactions with one another. For example, when bleach and ammonia are combined, this mixture creates deadly chloramines fumes!

6. Demand that government require companies to disclose product ingredients and replace toxic chemicals with safer alternatives.

Contact your congressional representative and ask them to support legislation that would require companies to disclose their product ingredients. Also ask them to support chemical policy reform. For more information go to: www.louisvillecharter.org/

7. Join Women's Voices for the Earth (www.womenandenvironment.org) or other environmental health advocacy organizations in your area that are working to change chemical policy.

Together, we can make an impact!



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