Your Party Hosting Kit

A PROJECT OF WOMEN'S VOICES FOR THE EARTH

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ALI SOLOMON
WVE Supporter
"I recycle my newspaper by using it to clean the mirrors and glass surfaces in my house. It doesn't streak or leave behind pesky fibers like paper towels do."

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Welcome

Thank you for hosting a Green Cleaning party! You'll find everything you need in this booklet to make non-toxic cleaning products and become an ambassador for health!

Women's Voices for the Earth (WVE), is a nationwide community of tens of thousands of visionary women — like you — who are working to eliminate toxic chemicals from our homes and our communities.

From mercury in mascara, to phthalates in fragrance, to styrene in maxi pads, there are roughly 80,000 chemicals registered for use in the U.S., yet only about 200 have been thoroughly evaluated for safety. What's more, most toxic chemicals used in consumer products are not even disclosed. This lack of research and transparency has resulted in enormous costs to women's health. Over the last 70 years, breast cancer rates have risen from a risk of 1 in 20 to 1 in 8; the onset of puberty is occurring at an earlier age among young girls; endometriosis, a leading cause of female infertility, is far more common today than 50 years ago. The impacts of toxic chemicals on women and girls, especially among low-income women, female workers, and communities of color, have historically been overlooked. Yet, women have a huge amount of social, economic, and political power to create healthy communities and homes.

This party kit is a tool to help you flex that power! Use it to teach others about hidden hazards in cleaning products and create lasting change by becoming an advocate for health. You can take simple, yet incredibly powerful, steps to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals.

THANK YOU for joining the ranks of thousands of women across the nation who have hosted their own Green Cleaning Parties! Through this action, you are taking on toxics in cleaning products and taking control of the products you use in your home.

Now, let's get this party started…

Let's Get This Party Started

Suggested Party Agenda

WELCOME GUESTS

It's a party! Build in some time for people to eat, drink and socialize.

WATCH, READ AND LEARN

Go online to www.womensvoices.org/green-cleaning-recipes to learn more about making simple DIY non-toxic cleaners. Give your guests a chance to read sections of this kit or fact sheets on toxic chemicals in cleaning products and impact on women's health.

CREATE YOUR OWN CLEANERS

Choose one or two recipes and then get ready to mix!

ENCOURAGE YOUR GUESTS TO TAKE ACTION!

Call cleaning companies or your legislators and tell them what's on your mind.

USE YOUR NEW CLEANERS TO TIDY UP AFTER YOUR GUESTS!

Supply Checklist

HERE'S A CHECKLIST OF ITEMS YOU'LL NEED TO GATHER

- Recipe ingredients*
- Mixing utensils (spoons, bowls, funnel and measuring cups
- Storage containers for the cleaners (Spray bottles/glass jars plastic containers)**
- Small cleaning towels
- Computer to play how-to videos on www.womensvoices.org/green-cleaning-recipes
- Fact sheets to hand out to guests
- Food and beverages - make it a potluck for fun!

* You can ask each guest to bring enough of a certain ingredient for the whole party or buy in bulk and have partygoers chip in a few dollars each.

** You can reuse a plastic bottle from something else -- just make sure it's very clean! We recommend purchasing industrial cleaning spray bottles from a local custodial supply store because vinegar can corrode some bottle components. Or, save glass jars from your kitchen - wash them well, and reuse.

THE DIRT ON TOXICS IN YOUR CLEANERS

Many of us use cleaners to create a clean and healthy environment. But did you know that some of the products you use may be harmful to your health? Some household cleaners contain toxic chemicals linked to birth defects, fertility problems and asthma. You can learn more about the effects of toxic chemicals by reading the report *Household Hazards* at **www.womensvoices.org**. But no need to feel like an expert on this -- we'll bring the expert to your party!

Your party guests can learn more about toxic chemicals from information in this kit. In it, WVE staff explain what chemicals you should look out for and why, as well as information on how you and your friends can help change policy around toxics in products. You can also download fact sheets and tips from **www.womensvoices.org** and hand them out to your guests.

WHAT ABOUT USING "NATURAL" CLEANERS FROM THE STORE?

You've likely seen some recent additions on the cleaning-product shelves of your local store. These cleaners adverse themselves as natural, green, organic and pure alternatives to the harsh formulations of traditional cleaners. So why not just use those instead?

Currently, companies are not required to list ingredients on product labels, nor are ingredients evaluated by a regulatory body for safety before going to market. In addition, very few standards exist regarding how companies market their products. It sure sounds great to call a product natural, but unless we can see exactly what's in it, we can't know for sure whether the ingredients are safe or toxic.

The Stink on Air Fresheners

Air fresheners may cover up smelly odors, but some chemicals used in fresheners have been linked to birth defects and reproductive problems.

Go to **www.nrdc.org/resources/clearing-air-hidden-hazards-air-fresheners** to find out what all the stink is about.

DORI GILELS
WVE Supporter

"To mask the smell of vinegar in my All-Purpose Cleaner, I add a few drops of lemon or lavender essential oil. It creates a fresh scent that lingers in the best way."

Common Sense Information

Use common sense with your homemade cleaners, as you would with other household products.

1) Keep homemade cleaners in a secure locations where kids can't access them.

2) Use the labels that come in your Green Cleaning Party Kit to list exactly what's in your homemade cleaners, especially if you are re-using old jars or other containers.

3) If you or your child accidentally swallows your homemade cleaner, drink a glass of milk or water and then contact your local poison control center or physician for advice. Unlike commercial cleaners, you'll be able to provide information about what is in the cleaner that was swallowed.

4) If a product gets in your eye, flush with water and contact your physician if irritation persists.

THE HOMEMADE SOLUTION

The good news is that you can avoid toxics in cleaners altogether by making your own cleaning products. Who needs potentially hazardous chemicals when you can use safe ingredients like baking soda and vinegar?

DO THEY REALLY WORK?

Yes! Let's look at some of the properties of two ingredients found in most of our recipes: vinegar and baking soda. **Vinegar** deodorizes; dissolves mineral deposits and grease; removes soap traces, mildew and wax build up; polishes brass, chrome, copper, pewter and stainless steel; cleans brick and stone; removes decals and stickers; and removes water spots on leather. **Baking soda** neutralizes acid; scrubs shiny materials without scratching; deodorizes refrigerators, carpets, upholstery, vinyl and drains; extinguishes grease fires; and cleans and polishes aluminum, chrome, jewelry, plastic, porcelain, silver, stainless steel and tin.

WHAT THE SCIENCE SHOWS

Several studies have shown regular household vinegar to be as effective or nearly as effective as commercial cleaners in eliminating microbes like E.coli from surfaces and sponges, effectively eliminating between 90-98% of bacteria. For removing dirt and soil from surfaces, studies have shown that plain old soap and water with a little elbow grease do the job just as well as commercial cleaners.

HOW CLEAN IS CLEAN?

Disinfection is important in certain situations -- like reducing the spread of infection in hospital settings or food-borne illness in food service establishments, and it is recommended for individuals with weak immune systems. But for most folks it is unnecessary to sterilize very surface in your home to stay healthy. In fact, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that one of the best methods for effectively reducing and preventing illness is regular hand washing!

Everyone has their own version of what feels "clean" to them. When you make your own cleaners (just like when you try out a new commercial brand) there's always a bit of trail and error at first. Does it smell nice? Does it work on that deep greasy stain? Play around with the recipes in this party kit and make any changes that fit *your* needs!

MARIA GONZALEZ-MARBUTT
Bilingual Advisor
"To prevent greasy buildup in the oven, I dip a sponge in vinegar and wipe down all sides of the oven before I cook."

GOOD FOR YOUR WALLET

Not only will you have the peace of mind knowing your homemade cleaners are safe, making your own cleaners is also good for your wallet.

LAUNDRY DETERGENT (including fabric softener)	
Homemade	$0.13 per load
Storebrand	$0.48 per load
ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER 32 oz	
Homemade	$0.38
Storebrand	$4.00-$8.00
CREAMY SOFT SCRUB 16 oz	
Homemade	$0.78
Storebrand	$3.69
FURNITURE POLISH 16 oz	
Homemade	$3.89
Storebrand	$4.39
TOILET BOWL CLEANER	
Homemade	$1.05
Storebrand	$2.99
DRAIN OPENER 32 oz	
Homemade	$1.40
Storebrand	$2.99

(approximate prices)

Don't Just Get Mad ... Get Organized!

In 2015, WVE released an analysis of the fragrance ingredient, Galaxolide, revealing the chemical to be highly toxic to aquatic life and a threat to human health. The study also highlighted that the company, SC Johnson (Glade®, Windex®, Pledge®) was using this toxic fragrance chemical in over 80 of its products. WVE and partners organized women across the country to contact SC Johnson and demand that they remove this toxic ingredient from their formulas. In response, SC Johnson -- one of the world's largest cleaning product manufacturers -- committed to remove Galaxolide from its products. This public health victory happened because thousands of women raised their voices and demanded changes. When it comes to our health, we can't afford to be silent!

STAY INFORMED, STAY INVOLVED

At Women's Voices for the Earth, we believe that women have the power to change the practices of companies and the policies of government. We do this by using scientific research to educate companies and legislators about the potential harm toxic chemicals can have on their constituents. This data, compounded with public outcry from consumers like you, can and does create substantive change. Let's get started!

ERIN SWITALSKI
Executive Director
"When I clean my bathtub, I shake some baking soda in it, then splash in some vinegar. It makes a nice paste to scrub with and gets my tub perfectly clean!"

SUPPORT WOMEN'S VOICES FOR THE EARTH!

By reading this kit, you've already shown a commitment to a safe, healthy environment. Your support will strengthen our voice in the national dialogue on regulating toxic chemicals. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to our organization. You can donate securely online at:

www.womensvoices.org/give
or send a check to: Women's Voices for the Earth, PO Box 8743, Missoula, MT 59807-8743

GET ADVOCACY UPDATES, TIPS, AND IDEAS DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX!

Sign up for WVE's Action Network at **www.womensvoices.org.**

SPREAD THE WORD!

Please encourage your guests to host their own Green Cleaning party and expand the circle of women who understand the problem and are taking action to fix it.

TELL ELECTED OFFICIALS TO DO THE RIGHT THING!

In order to create lasting change, we need strong policies that play it safe when it comes to toxic chemicals. Give your elected officials a call and let them know that you think our government should require companies to disclose product ingredients and replace toxic chemicals with safer alternatives.

TELL COMPANIES YOU DON'T WANT TOXIC PRODUCTS!

Companies want to hear from you -- that's why they put a toll-free number on every label. Grab your favorite cleaning product, call the company and ask them to remove toxic ingredients from their products.

WVE is asking these leading manufacturers to come clean with the public about their products. Using the sample script below as a guide, give them a call and tell them how you feel.

PROCTER & GAMBLE
(Mr. Clean, Spic & Span and more)
Each P&G brand has a different toll-free number. Check your product label for information.
us.pg.com

THE CLOROX COMPANY
(Formula 49, SOS, Pine-Sol and more)
1.800.227.1860
www.clorox.com

SC JOHNSON & SON
(Windex, Glade, Drano and more)
1.800.494.4855
www.scjbrands.com

RB (formally RECKITT-BENCKISER)
(Easy Off, Glass Plus, Lysol and more)
1.800.228.4722
www.rb.com

Hi, I just read a report about toxic chemicals in cleaning products that are linked to asthma and reproductive harm. As a consumer I want (NAME of company or brand) to remove toxic chemicals that might cause health problems and to list all ingredients on the package labels.

Next, contact your legislators and ask them to take action. Use the sample script below as a guide.

Hi, my name is (YOUR NAME) and I'm a constituent of (NAME OF LEGISLATOR). I'd like the Representative/Senator to support legislation that requires companies to disclose ingredients on product labels. Also, I want the government to prove that chemicals are safe BEFORE they are allowed on the market instead of testing them on consumers. I would appreciate a response from the Senator/Representative on these issues.

Find out who your legislators are by calling your local elections office or visit www.usa.gov/elected-officials.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for sharing the important information in this kit with your friends. By doing so, you are helping to build a movement of women and men who believe that we deserve to live in a safe, healthy environment free from exposure to toxic chemicals.

And you thought you were just throwing a party!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is oxygen bleach and where can I find it?
Oxygen bleach is most commonly sold in powdered form and is made of sodium percarbonate. When dissolved in water, sodium percarbonate releases hydrogen peroxide which acts as a natural whitener in laundry. Powdered oxygen bleach can be found in the laundry aisle of most grocery stores with brand names usually including the term "Oxy-" or "Oxi-".

Where can I find soap flakes?
You can buy a box of soap flakes at a natural food store (we recommend calling first) or online, but the easiest solution is to make your own! Use any non-liquid castile soap that does not contain sodium lauryl (laureth) sulfate (SLS) or Diethanolamine (DEA), and simply grate it with a cheese grater.

What is washing soda? Where can I buy it?
Washing soda (sodium carbonate) is in the same family as baking soda but it is much more caustic (it has a pH of 11), so you should wear gloves when mixing it to avoid irritating your skin. Washing soda cuts grease, removes wax or lipstick and neutralizes odors in the same way that baking soda does. Don't use washing soda on delicate items like silks, woolens or vinyls. It is found in the laundry section of most supermarkets.

Is vegetable glycerin necessary?
Vegetable glycerin is used as a preservative and is a by-product of palm and coconut oil production. You can buy vegetable glycerin online or find it in soap-making supply stores, health food and/or herbal supplement stores. Essential oils may be substituted as an alternative preservative, but if you plan to make a large batch of cleaner and save some for later use, vegetable glycerin will significantly increase the shelf life of your product.

How do I dispose of my leftover conventional cleaners?
The best thing to do is to use up what you have left of your conventional cleaners. If you suspect you have sensitivities to these products, you may want to stop using them. But, don't flush them down the drain or put them in the trash. If you'd prefer to remove them from your house, contact your local health department or waste disposal service and ask how you can safely dispose of them in your area. Some cleaners are considered "household hazardous waste" and must be disposed of properly.

What are essential oils?
Do I have to use them in these recipes?
Essential oils are liquids formed from the distillation of the leaves, stems or flowers of a plant. They are very concentrated liquids, so a little (even just a few drops) goes a long way. Essential oils are purely optional in our recipes. Some people use them to add an attractive scent to the product; in addition they have anti-bacterial properties and can be used as a preservative. They are commonly available in health food stores, and are sold online. You may want to look for ecologically harvested essential oils.

JEAN DUNCAN
Director of Finance and Administration
"When the kitchen still smells like last night's lasagna, instead of using a room deodorizer, I cut up a lemon and run it through the garbage disposal. The smell of citrus covers up the odors in no time!"

WARNING: *It should be noted that some people can be highly sensitive to essential oils, leading to symptoms such as headaches, asthma exacerbation or other health effects. If you, your family members, or other guests to your home may be affected by essential oils, simply leave them out of the recipes. This will not impact your cleaner's effectiveness.*

ONLINE EXTRAS

You can find more cleaning recipes, food and drink recipes (window-cleaner martini, anyone?), FAQs and other fun and useful information at: **www.womensvoices.org.**

ALEX SCRANTON
Director of Science and Research
"Cut down on cleaning and harmful chemicals by taking off your shoes before entering your house. Along with dirt, shoes can track in nasty hitchhikers like lawn pesticides, coal tar from a driveway, etc."

COMMON HOUSEHOLD CLEANING CHEMICALS LINKED TO ASTHMA AND REPRODUCTIVE HARM

Monoethanolamine (MEA) is a surfactant found in some laundry detergents, all-purpose cleaners and floor cleaners and is a known inducer of occupational asthma.

Ammonium quaternary compounds are disinfectants found in some disinfectant sprays and toilet cleaners that have been identified as inducers of occupational asthma.

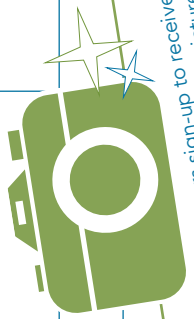
Glycol ethers, such as 2-butoxyethanol, are solvents commonly found in glass cleaners and all-purpose spray cleaners that have been linked to reduced fertility and low birth weight in exposed mice.

Alkyl phenol ethoxylates (APEs) are surfactants found in laundry detergents, stain removers and all-purpose cleaners, which have been found to reduce embryo survival in fish, and alter tadpole development. APEs are commonly detected as contaminants in rivers and streams and have also been found in household dust.

Phthalates are carriers for fragrance in glass cleaners, deodorizers, laundry detergents and fabric softeners, which have been linked to adverse reproductive effects on baby boys, reduced sperm count in adult men, lower thyroid function in girls, and increased allergic symptoms and asthma in children.

Join us! *Sign-up to get the news you need from WVE!*

First Name	Last Name	Email	Zip



Have party-goers sign-up to receive WVE updates, then simply snap a picture of the list with your phone and email it to us at: womensvoices@womensvoices.org.

SUPPORT WOMEN'S VOICES FOR THE EARTH

Please donate online today! www.womensvoices.org/give

JAMIE McCONNELL
Director of Programs and Policy
"Instead of using store-bought fabric softener, I add 1/2 cup of vinegar to my laundry load. It's just as effective and saves money. Or, if the weather is nice, I'll hang my clothes on a line and skip the dryer!"

Email us stories and personal tips from your party at: womensvoices@womensvoices.org

WOMEN'S VOICES FOR THE EARTH
OUR HEALTH. OUR FUTURE. TOXIC FREE.
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