

# The Green Home Cleaning Manual

by David Brossart, MS, MLS



can protect yourself and your family—how these products can affect your health, how you can identify them, and how to clean your home effectively without them.

**How common household products affect health:** **Air fresheners** often contain chemicals that are linked to lung damage, and they are a risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

**All-purpose cleaners** often contain chemicals that can cause heart problems, low blood pressure, and respiratory arrest. **Glass cleaners** often contain lung and skin irritants. Mixed with chlorine, the fumes can cause serious damage to the lungs. **Chlorine bleach**

is the cleaner most commonly swallowed by children. Mixed with ammonia or acidic cleaners like vinegar, it forms chloramine gas, extremely toxic even with brief exposure. **Mold removers** often contain chemical fungicides that cause debilitating allergic reactions, respiratory disease, and asthma. **Disinfectant cleaners** often contain chemicals that can cause serious kidney and liver damage. **Floor and furniture polish** often contain chemicals that can cause severe respiratory problems. These products have also been correlated with cancer and birth defects. **Toilet bowl cleaners** often contain chemicals that can burn the skin, seriously

injure the stomach if swallowed, and cause blindness if splashed in the eyes.

Damaging ingredients can be inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin. Take no comfort in knowing that so far, you've managed to avoid serious health problems, because it often takes years of exposure before the damage becomes noticeable.

**How you can tell which products are toxic.** Begin by examining all your cleaning products. Look through your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room, and wherever else you may keep them. Read the labels. Do you see any of the following ingredients: ammonia, calcium hypochlorite, chlorine, diethylene glycol, ethanol, hydrochloric acid, naphtha nitrobenzene, oxalic acid, petroleum distillate, phenol, phosphates, potassium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide, sodium hypochlorite, 1,4-dichlorobenzene? Every one of these common ingredients has now been classified as toxic by the U.S. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency). If any of them appears on the label, take our advice: Get these hazardous products out of your home!

Alternative products. You can find some excellent non-toxic cleaning products and mold removers at our local health food stores. We recommend vegetable-enzyme based products like MoldZyme, MultiZyme, and AirZyme, which are effective and 100-percent safe. If you're unable to find the right products, or if you need free advice about any of the topics in this article, call Healthy Home at 407-869-9037.

Contact the EPA at 1-800-490-9198, or search for "Household Products" at [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov). To check on a particular product or ingredient, visit the National Institutes of Health at [householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm](http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm).

In a featured article on his website, Andrew Weil, MD, said: "Almost all household cleaning products contain some toxic ingredients, and many contain carcinogens or suspected carcinogens." *What?* Doesn't the Government prohibit the sale of household products that are toxic to humans? As a matter of fact, they don't. Strangely enough, the same chemicals they prohibit in the workplace are unregulated in the home. Many of the name-brand cleaning products displayed on our supermarket shelves contain toxic chemicals. It's very likely that you have some of these hazardous products in your home. I hope to help explain how you

## How to Make Your Own Safe Cleaning Products:

**Antibacterial solution:** Vinegar kills 80 to 99% of bacteria and viruses. Pour a few cups into drains weekly.

**Antibacterial spray & deodorizer:** Add a teaspoon of pure essential oil of lavender to a cup of water in a spray bottle and shake well. Just spray on, and let stand 15 minutes or until dry.

**Ammonia-based cleaners:** Spray with full-strength white vinegar and wipe down.

**Dishwashing detergent:** Mix equal amounts of borax and baking soda in a container. Use about 4 tablespoons of this mixture in your dishwasher.

**Disinfectant:** Wipe with a solution of half of a gallon of boiling water and half of a cup of borax. Rinse well.

**Drain cleaner:** Use a plunger on clogged drains. Keep the drain clear by removing residue under the drain opening. Monthly, apply 1 cup baking soda with 2 cups vinegar, and then flush with boiling water.

**Floor cleaner:** For wood floors, combine 1 ounce olive oil, 1/2 cup vinegar, 1/2 cup peppermint tea, and 2 gallons warm water. For tile floors, combine 1 gallon water with 1 or 2 cups white vinegar.

**Furniture polish:** Melt in a double boiler at medium heat: 1 ounce beeswax and 1 ounce carnauba wax with 2.5 ounces olive oil and 1.5 ounces coconut oil. Remove from heat & hand-mix with 4 ounces distilled water till smooth. Add a small amount to a soft cloth and work it into the wood. Shelf life is up to 12 months.

**Laundry bleach:** Add 1/2 cup of borax, baking soda, or white vinegar to a load of laundry.

**Oven cleaner:** Make a paste of baking soda and white vinegar, apply liberally to a warm oven (in the OFF position), and soak a few minutes (or more) before wiping.

**Scouring powder:** Make a paste from lemon juice and either borax or baking soda. Scrub area with the abrasive side of a sponge. Use ceramic-friendly pumice on hard stains. Rinse well.

**Toilet cleaners:** Use a toilet brush with borax or baking soda. For tough stains, add vinegar to the water and let it soak, or use a pumice stone that's safe for ceramics.

## How to make your own safe cleaning products.

The cleaners in the box to the left take time to prepare and may take a bit longer to work, but they're economical and safe. Before implementing the above directions, read and test them thoroughly. People, materials, and fabric can be expected to react differently to the procedures described. For this reason, we cannot warrant nor have any liability for the information provided. Remember, if you have any health issues, please discuss them with your physician.

**David Brossart is Managing Partner of Healthy Home Distributors LLC. This firm is committed to safe and efficient green cleaning. Healthy Home can be reached at 407-869-9037 or at [healthyhomecleaning@cfl.rr.com](mailto:healthyhomecleaning@cfl.rr.com).**