

GREEN CLEANING GUIDE

Healthy Tips for Homes, Schools & Workplaces



Green cleaning means using less toxic cleaning products that are safer for people, animals, and the environment in homes, schools, and workplaces. Green cleaning practices can provide improved indoor air quality, reduce health risk from exposure, and protect the environment, while maintaining a healthy level of cleanliness and disinfection.

Going green means that it must be accessible to all including corner store shoppers. To that end, we promote and advocate for solutions that are readily available, affordable (cost neutral or cheaper) and effective. See chart on reverse side for **Home SAFE Home** cleaning solutions.

WHY GO GREEN?

Many of the cleaning products we use every day can be harmful to people, animals and the environment in the manufacturing process and disposal.

Chemicals in cleaning products can cause skin, respiratory and allergy distress, cancer, and reproductive harm.

Even anti-bacterial soaps, sponges and scrubbies are harmful. They kill bacteria essential to intestinal tract, hinder production of vitamins that protect your mouth and skin, and inhibit immune system development.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Non-toxic
- Biodegradable
- Phosphate Free
- Recycled content containers
- Bulk packaging
- Natural fragrances
- Contains no dyes, chlorine, or hypochlorite
- Full disclosure or labeling of “active” & “inert” ingredients



GO GREEN AT SCHOOL!

Cleaning products are especially dangerous around children and custodial staff who use them every day at school.

Currently, all of NJ's state properties and authorities are required to purchase and utilize green cleaning products (Executive Order #76, 2006). However, if you want to go green in schools and other public facilities, you must take your own initiative.

RESOURCES

- Clean Water Action can provide homes, businesses and schools with training and consultation. Contact us at 732-963-9714 or njcwa@cleanwater.org.
- NJ Sustainable Schools Program: www.globallearningnj.org
- U.S. EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) products: www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/pubs/products/cleaning.htm
- Environmental Working Group list of harmful chemicals: www.ewg.org/chemindex/list



Clean Water Action & Clean Water Fund

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PRODUCT	INGREDIENT & EFFECTS	ALTERNATIVE
Drain Cleaner	<i>Lye:</i> Burns human tissue	Metal snake, plunger or baking soda, salt with white vinegar
Deodorizer / Air Freshener	<i>Cresol, phenols, formaldehyde:</i> Health problems, including cancer	Baking soda in frig, cat pan, trash can; pouppourie; white vinegar for cleaning up animal "accidents" on carpet/furniture
Dish Cleaner	<i>Non-biodegradable chemicals:</i> Harsh to skin	Grated bar soap, liquid castile soap, washing soda, and some (optional) essential oils
Floor Cleaner & Shining	<i>Phenols:</i> Can cause cancer, vapors remain in house	Vegetable based oil soap (e.g. Murphy's) in water mixture
Furniture Cleaner & Polish	<i>Phenols:</i> see above	Oil soap on damp cloth
General Cleaner	<i>Ammonia:</i> Carcinogen, causes respiratory distress; mixed together with chlorine causes deadly chloramine gas	Oil soap, Bon Ami, a "comet" like cleaner [spot treat with 1% bleach as disinfectant]
Glass Cleaner	<i>Ammonia:</i> See above	50:50 white vinegar and water
Laundry Cleaner	<i>Bleach, boosters, scents & phosphates:</i> irritates skin, non-biodegradable causing algae blooms & fish kills	Liquid detergents don't have phosphates; use washing soda or Borax to give a cleaning boost instead of bleach; bleach only selected and necessary items
Oven Cleaner	<i>Lye:</i> Caustic, can burn, fumes can scar lungs, can blind eyes	Self-cleaning oven, tray that can be removed to clean, apply baking soda paste, use steel wool
Mothballs or Flakes	<i>Dichlorobenzene or naphthalene:</i> Respiratory distress, if children ingest can cause seizures	Cedar and/or lavender in drawers, closets & sealed containers; put cedar shavings from pet store in old stocking & tie up
Toilet Cleaner	<i>Hydrochloric acid:</i> Burns skin & eyes, fumes can burn lungs, if swallowed can cause death	Soap, Bon Ami, white vinegar for buildup, 1/2 cup of baking soda to freshen up
Anti-bacterial soap	<i>Fungicides and/or 2 4 D, a common pesticide:</i> Harmful to intestinal track, kills good bacteria, and causes immune system disorders	Liquid or bar non-detergent soap; wash and rub hands for at least 20-30 seconds
Anti-bacterial scrubbies	<i>Fungicides and/or 2 4 D, a common pesticide:</i> See above	Use a non-anti-bacterial sponge; put in microwave for 30 seconds or dry cycle of dishwasher to clean.

LAUNDRY TIPS



Pre-soak: soak heavily soiled items in warm water with 1/2 cup of washing soda for 30 min. Rub soiled areas with liquid soap.

Stain remover: Soak spot in cool water immediately, sponge away as much as possible with club soda. Air-dry fabric since heat of dryer can "set" stains permanently.

Blood: Pour hydrogen peroxide directly on bloodstain and rinse in cold water.

Chocolate & Coffee: Soak in cold water, rub with soap and a mild borax solution and rinse. Wash in water as hot as fabric will stand.

Grass: Rub with glycerin (available in drug stores), let stand for 1 hr., then wash.

Perspiration: Rub with solution of vinegar and lemon juice in water.

Fruit & Wine: Soak in cold water for 30 min. Rub soap into remaining stain and wash in water as hot as fabric will stand. Bleach with lemon juice and sunlight if needed.

Ink: For a ballpoint pen, sponge with rubbing alcohol, rub with soap, rinse, and wash. For a felt-tip pen, rub with soap, rinse and wash.

Lipstick: Rub with cold cream or shortening to dissolve color, rinse area with solution of washing soda in warm water as necessary to remove grease. Wash in soapy water as hot as fabric will stand.

Mildew: Wash with soap and water. Rinse well, dry in sun. If spot remains, apply lemon juice, rub with salt, and dry in sun. Wash.