

## NON-TOXIC ALTERNATIVES

**Window Cleaner:** Fill a 1-quart spray bottle with water & 3 tablespoons vinegar.

**Kitchen Cleanser:** Use baking soda on non-scratch surfaces; 4 tablespoons vinegar & 1 cup water on scratchable surfaces.

**Tub & Tile Cleaner:** Add to 1/2 cup water:  
2/3 cup baking soda  
1/2 cup liquid soap  
2 tablespoons vinegar (add last)

**Shoe Polish:** A touch of olive oil.

**Disinfectant:** Add to 2 cups water:  
3 tablespoons liquid soap  
20-30 drops tea tree oil

**Fabric Softener:** Add to WHITE rinse cycle  
2 cups white vinegar (may fade colors)  
a few drops of essential oil

**Fragrance:** Essential plant oils can be added to homemade cleaners. A few drops can enhance our perception of cleanliness

**Commercial Cleaners & Disinfectant:**  
There are also many less toxic alternatives at natural health stores and grocery stores. Organic and biodegradable products are generally the safest. Natural products tend to be the next safest, with conventional cleaners and disinfectants being the least safe. Home recipes tend to save money, are biodegradable and earth friendly.

These recipes and more may be found in The Household Detective Primer, CHEC 's Guide To Environmental Childproofing. (see resources)

## RESOURCES

<http://www.cehn.org>

**Children's Environmental Health Network**  
1604 Solano Avenue Berkeley, CA 94707  
510/ 526-0081

<http://www.rachel.org>

Provides understandable scientific information about human health and the environment.

<http://www.panna.org/panna/>

**Pesticide Action Network North America**  
49 Powell Street, Suite 500 San Francisco, CA 94102 415/981-1771 A comprehensive list of alternatives to pesticides for virtually every pest problem.

[www.ehnca.org](http://www.ehnca.org)

**Environmental Health Network (EHN of California)** P.O. Box 1155, Larkspur, CA, 94977-1155 415/541-5075

<http://www.cheCNT.org>

**Children's Health & Environmental Coalition** P0 Box 1540, Princeton, NJ 08542 609/252-1915 CHEC's mission is to protect children from chronic health & developmental problems linked to preventable exposures to toxic substances in home, schools and communities.

**"The Household Detective Primer; A Guide to Environmental Childproofing."**  
Send \$10.00 to CHEC at above address.

**"Home, Safe Home: Protecting Yourself and Your Family from Everyday Harmful Household Products"** by Debra Dadd (Putnam, 1997).



# YOUR HOME

PERSONAL CHOICES

A GUIDE TO REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

**Pesticide Free Zone**  
Box 824  
Kentfield, CA 94914  
[www.pesticidefreezone.org](http://www.pesticidefreezone.org)  
888/590-3993

## Did You Know

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**Commonly used products such as household cleaners, paints, personal care products, plastics, and car-pet cleaners are some of the most toxic products we encounter every day in our home.**

**FACT:** 11 billion dollars' worth of household cleaning products, of which many contain alcohol, ammonia, bleach, formaldehyde or lye are sold annually. These chemicals can cause damage to the respiratory system, nervous system, liver, and kidneys, and can trigger some cancers. (Logan, K. Clean House, Clean Planet: Clean Your House for Pennies a Day; The Safe, Non-Toxic Way, Pocket Books, 1997, pp 17-23)

**FACT:** Disinfectants used in cleaning products are registered pesticides.

**FACT:** Many paint contains unlisted mildew and fungi-killer pesticides. Deodorizers contain anti-microbial material.

**FACT:** Household chemicals are absorbed through the air breathed and through skin contact.

**FACT:** The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that some of the most common household chemicals have been linked to allergies, birth defects, cancer and psychological abnormalities.

**FACT:** Household chemicals become toxic waste that ends up in the environment.

**FACT:** According to the EPA, most homes have airborne concentrations of hazardous chemicals that are 2-5x higher than outdoors.

**FACT:** "Toxins in U.S. homes now account for 90% of all reported poisonings." (Rose Ann Soloway, administrator of the American Association of Poison Control Centers.)

**FACT:** According to the EPA, 50% of all illness can be traced to indoor pollution, which is 10 times more toxic than its outdoor counterpart.

**FACT:** The U.S. government has not conducted even basic toxicity testing for up to 75% of the top-volume chemicals in commercial use today and up to 90% of the largest volume chemicals in respect to their toxicity to children.

**FACT:** Up to 65% of water contamination is due to household use of toxic chemicals.

**FACT:** 85,000 chemicals are in use and approximately 1,000 synthetics enter the market each year. Most of these chemicals have been inadequately studied. Among the substances posing health risks are:

- Organochlorine pesticides (non-degradable or poorly degradable, persist in the environment and in the body are fat-soluble and contain high number of carcinogens)
- PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls – tend to be persistent in the environment, reactive within human tissues, and frequently associated with cancer)
- Chlorinated dioxins (combination of chlorine & organic matter - persist in air and water, are stored in fat.)
- Endocrine disruptors (interfere with human and animal reproductive health)

*E Magazine, January 1999*

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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**PROBLEM:** Toxins in our homes, from a variety of sources, can be extremely dangerous to our families' health.

### **SOLUTION:**

- Be vigilant and educated
- Use organic, biodegradable, non-toxic cleaners
- Read labels on personal care products
- Check labels on paint, carpet cleaners, personal cleansing products, & home cleaning products for known toxins
- Consider an air purifying system
- Change vacuum cleaner bags frequently
- Educate your household to reduce risk and exposure to toxins
- Avoid poisonous combinations such as ammonia & chlorine when using cleaning products

**LABEL GUIDE:** What do the "signal words" mean on the back of a cleaning product? The levels of toxicity indicated on labels are set for adults not children. They only denote acute harm from ingestion, breathing fumes or contact with eyes or skin. They do not address the affects of chronic exposure, which is often a greater risk.

### **DANGER!**

#### **highly toxic**

(less than a teaspoon can harm or kill an adult) corrosive (can burn the skin or eyes) or is flammable

### **WARNING!**

#### **moderately toxic**

(a teaspoon or an ounce can harm or kill an adult)

### **CAUTION!**

#### **slightly toxic**

(more than an ounce can harm or produce a toxic effect in an adult)