

HEALTHY CLEANING ALTERNATIVES:*Safe, effective household products*

What if you were potentially doing more harm than good when you clean your house? You may not know it, but some of the household cleaning products we rely on to remove dust, dirt, bacteria, germs and odors may leave behind harmful chemicals that can pollute the air and cause potential health problems for you, your family, and pets. Some of these products are actually pesticides regulated under the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). They range from cleaning products to pet shampoos. To see if the product you are using is a pesticide check the label for an EPA number. This indicates that the product is classified as a pesticide.

Prolonged exposure to certain chemicals in these products has been linked to dizziness, nausea, allergic reactions, eye, skin and respiratory tract irritation, and in some cases, cancer.

While the potential health risks are minimized if exposure to such chemicals is limited to low levels and short periods of time, you should exercise caution and follow all manufacturers written instructions when using the following products:

- Aerosol spray products—including health, beauty and cleaning products
- Chlorine bleach
- Rug and upholstery cleaners
- Indoor air foggers (for the removal of pests)
- Insect/rodent repellent

Fortunately, many common products offer safe and effective cleaning solutions to the following problems:

- Grease cutter—1 cup of lemon juice + 1 cup of water
- Scouring powder—1 cup of baking soda + enough water to form a paste
- Laundry stain remover—1 tsp. of white vinegar or baking soda per machine load

- Toilet bowl cleaner—cup vinegar (leave overnight and brush the next day)
- Floor and furniture polish—2 parts vegetable oil + 1 part lemon juice (for leather furniture: 1 cup vinegar + 1 cup linseed oil)
- Metal cleaners (brass and copper)—lemon juice + salt to form a paste OR a lemon wedge dipped in baking soda OR hot white vinegar + salt OR hot ketchup applied with a rag
- Glass cleaner—1 part vinegar + 1 part water
- Rug and carpet cleaner—baking soda
- Flies—well-watered bowl of basil
- Moth Repellent—Cedar chips in cotton sachets
- Roach Repellent—Chopped bay leaves and cucumber skins

If you must use chemical products, here are some guidelines that will help minimize potential health risks:

- Identify, and avoid using toxic chemicals, if possible.
- Never use around children, pets, or food.
- Buy only amount needed for application; do not buy chemicals in bulk, and if you must, carefully store any unused quantities.
- Follow guidelines for proper disposal of chemicals.
- Always follow the manufacturer's directions for use and disposal.
- Wear appropriate clothing while applying and make sure to wash both the clothing and yourself after each application.
- Use only the recommended amount of the product and minimize the amount of time you're exposed to it.

These tips are brought to you by Health House® Rx. For more information on creating a healthier home environment, visit our web site at www.healthhouse.org.

For further information:

American Lung Association:
www.lungusa.org/air/household_products.html

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