

Indiana Healthy Homes
Alliance Presents:
**Green
Cleaning
101**

Most homeowners (and renters) spend a lot of money on cleaning products. There are products designed for cleaning kitchens, bathrooms, floors, toilets, glass, wood furniture – the list goes on and on. But many of these store-bought household cleaners contain chemicals that can be harmful, especially to children. You might be surprised to learn that some of the most basic, inexpensive ingredients – many of which you might already have in your home – can be mixed into natural cleaning solutions that will eliminate dirt, germs, and grease.

Visit the Indiana Healthy Homes Alliance website at indianahealthyhomesalliance.org, to download “Do It Yourself” (DIY) recipes for an all-purpose cleaner, glass cleaner, carpet cleaner, oven cleaner, air fresheners, and much more!

Common ingredients found in DIY cleaners:

DIY Ingredient:	Benefit:
Baking Soda	Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) is a natural mineral that effectively cleans, deodorizes, brightens, and cuts through grease and grime.
Vinegar	Thanks to its acidity, vinegar contains antimicrobial properties. It cleans effectively (and gently!) by eliminating grease, soap scum, and grime.
Castile Soap	Castile soap is a style of soap that’s made from 100 percent plant oils (meaning it uses no animal products or chemical detergents)
Borax	Borax (sodium tetraborate) is a natural mineral that is commonly used in laundry and around the house to remove soap scum on porcelain and fiberglass surfaces, and removes grease and grime.
Lemon Juice	Natural lemon juice destroys mold and mildew, cuts through grease, and shines hard surfaces.
Essential Oils	Essential oils have gained popularity thanks to aromatherapy, but these naturally occurring plant compounds also make great scent additions to homemade cleaning products (particularly if you do not like the smell of vinegar). Essential oils are generally considered safe, but these extracts <i>can</i> trigger allergies—so keep this in mind when choosing scents.

In the event that you are unable to make your own green cleaner, you should look for products that have been certified by a reputable third-party group such as Safer Choice, Green Good House Keeping, and Green Seal.

To find third party certified cleaning products visit:

Safer Choice- www.epa.gov/saferchoice

Green Good Housekeeping - <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/>

Green Seal - www.greenseal.org



Tips to remember when purchasing cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting products:

- Manufacturers are NOT required to prove that their products are safe OR list all the ingredients on the product label, especially those used in artificial fragrances.
- Marketing labels such as “natural,” “green,” “environmentally friendly,” and “non-toxic” have no legal meaning. They are marketing tools used by manufacturers. Don’t buy a product just because the label contains any of these terms.
- Dispose of hazardous products safely. Visit earth911’s website (<http://search.earth911.com/?what=HHW>) to find out where to dispose of hazardous household waste in your area.

Ingredients to Avoid:

Avoid:	Why:
Bleach or Sodium Hypochlorite	Known to cause and trigger asthma; causes severe skin burns and eye damage
Triclocarban and Triclosan	Suspected endocrine disruptors; can contribute to the development of bacterial “superbugs” that are resistant to disinfectants and antibiotics.
2-butoxyethanol (or ethylene glycol monobutyl ether) and other glycol ethers	May cause cancer in humans. May affect fertility, damage unborn fetus, as well as the liver and kidneys; can irritate the skin and eyes (with damage to eyes); inhalation causes irritation to nose and throat.
Fragrances/Phthalates (fragrances contain over 2000 chemicals)	Many are irritants; can trigger allergies, migraines, and asthma symptoms; can affect a child’s neurodevelopment and thyroid function. Studies have linked phthalates in mothers to abnormal sexual development in boys.
Alkylphenol ethoxylates (i.e. nonylphenol and octylphenol, ethoxylates or octoxynols	Suspected endocrine disruptors; toxic to aquatic animals
d-Limonene	Reacts with ozone and other compounds in the air to form formaldehyde, a known carcinogen
Dyes (may be listed as FD&C or D&C)	May cause cancer; can harm nervous system
Ethanolamines (i.e. monoethanolamine (MEA), diethanolamine (DEA) and triethanolamine (TEA))	Skin irritants; severe eye irritant. MEA is known to cause and trigger asthma; may damage the liver and kidneys; high exposure may affect the nervous system.
Quaternary ammonium compounds (QUATS) like: alkyl dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride (ADBAC), benzalkonium chloride; dodecyl-dimethyl-benzyl ammonium chloride, lauryl dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride	Are irritants and sensitizers, can induce an allergic response following skin contact; known to cause occupational asthma in cleaning workers; may cause adverse genetic and reproductive effects. QUATS are persistent in the environment and toxic to aquatic organisms and have been linked to antibiotic resistance.

Resources:

More information about safer tools, products and practices for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting can be found in *Green Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting: A Toolkit for Early Care and Education*, available at www.informedgreensolutions.org/?=publications/green-cleaning-toolkit



Indiana Healthy Homes Alliance is a
 program of Improving Kids' Environment
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