

Alternatives to Household Chemicals

What Are Household Chemicals?

Chemicals are common in many household products including personal care products, such as hair spray and spray deodorants; paints; hobby and home improvement supplies, such as glues and markers; aerosol sprays; cleaners and disinfectants; and automotive products. Household chemicals can irritate your eyes, nose and throat; cause headaches, visual disorders, and memory impairment; damage your central nervous system and kidneys; and possibly increase your risk of cancer.

Pesticides are another common source of household chemicals. Pesticides are used in and around the home to control insects, termites, rodents, fungi, and microbes. They are sold as sprays, powders, crystals, balls, and foggers. Pesticides are produced to be toxic to specific organisms, and consequently, can have both risks and benefits.

Biological contaminants are another household problem. Biological contaminants are or were living organisms and include bacteria, mold, mildew, animal dander, dust mites, cockroaches, and pollen. Two conditions are required to support biological contaminants - nutrients and moisture.

People often reach for household chemicals to control or prevent biological contaminants. People use harsh chemicals to clean bathrooms, carpets, and dishes in order to control mold, mildew, and bacteria. Using pesticides may seem like a quick and convenient solution to household insects. However, these actions can result in people being caught in a pollution cycle - using one pollutant to control another. In many cases, there are alternatives and safer solutions to household chemicals.

Why Choose Alternatives?

Choosing alternatives to household chemicals can break the pollution cycle in your home. Using fewer unnecessary chemicals will make your home a more healthy and safe environment. The following are alternatives and safer solutions for your home.

Alternatives and Safer Solutions to Household Chemicals

For This	Try This
Ants	Red chili powder at entrance point
Perspiration Stain Remover	White vinegar +water
Chrome Polish	Apple cider vinegar
Pet Odor Removal	Cedar vinegar
Automatic Dish Detergent	1/2 cup baking soda + liquid dishwashing detergent
Flies	Well-watered bowl of basil
Moth Repellent	Cedar chips in cotton sachets
Roach Repellent	Chopped bay leaves and cucumber skins

Fleas	Gradually add brewer's yeast to pet's diet (Consult your veterinarian)
Ink Spot Remover	Cold water + 1 tablespoon cream of tartar + lemon juice
Rug/Carpet Cleaner	Baking soda
Water Softener	1/4 cup vinegar
Toilet Bowl Cleaner	Baking soda + castile soap
Copper Cleaner	Rub with lemon; rinse and dry
Fertilizer	Compost yard clippings and organic waste from the kitchen (do not include meat or grease)
Oven Cleaner	2 tablespoons each liquid soap and borax + warm water (cover floor of oven with aluminum foil; clean spills promptly)
Car Battery Corrosion Removal	Baking soda and water
Linoleum Cleaner	1 cup white vinegar + 2 gallons of water
Mosquito Repellent	Burn citronella candles or oil
Insects on Plants	Rub soapy water on leaves; then rinse
Rusty Bolt/Nut Remover	Carbonated beverage
Oil Stain Remover	White chalk rubbed into stain before laundering
Mold and Mildew	Bleach, or equal parts vinegar and salt; scrub hard
Stain Remover	Club soda, lemon juice, or salt
Window Cleaner	2 tablespoons vinegar in 1 quart warm water
Drain Cleaner	1/2 cup each baking soda and vinegar, wait 2 minutes, add 2 quarts boiling water, and repeat
Air Freshener	Use herbal bouquets, pure vanilla on a cotton ball, or simmer cinnamon and cloves
Slugs and Snails	Onion and marigold plants