

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:

- **Healthy Schools, Healthy Towns**
cleanwateraction.org/campaign/hsht
- **Safer Cleaning Products**
womensvoices.org/safe-cleaning-products
- **EWG’s Skin Deep Cosmetics Database**
ewg.org/skindeep
- **Campaign for Safe Cosmetics**
safecosmetics.org



Clean Water Action & Clean Water Fund

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PRODUCT	INGREDIENT & EFFECTS	ALTERNATIVE
Anti-bacterial soaps/ scrubbies	<i>Fungicides, Triclosan, 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 with warm water. If you must use hand sanitizer, use alcohol-based without triclosan. Use non-anti-bacterial sponge; put in microwave for 30 seconds or dry cycle of dishwasher to clean. If the package label says "not suitable for aquarium use" then it is embedded with a fungicide or pesticide.
All Purpose Cleaner	<i>Ammonia:</i> Carcinogen, causes respiratory distress; if mixed with bleach forms a poisonous gas	Vinegar, Bon Ami, a "comet" like cleaner, hot soapy water, or oil soap (e.g. Murphy's). This can be used on counters, floors, cabinets, etc.
Cleaning up Pet Stains	<i>Carpet clean contains Perchloroethylene (PERC):</i> Neurotoxin and possible carcinogen	Use white vinegar on the soiled spot on floor, carpet or furniture. Animals will tend NOT to return to that spot in future.
Drain Cleaner	<i>Sodium Hydroxide (Lye):</i> Caustic, can burn, fumes can scar lungs, can blind eyes	Pour 1 cup baking soda and 1 cup white vinegar down drain, wait 30 minutes then rinse with hot water. Repeat as necessary. Plunging or use of a snake is also effective in unclogging drains.
Deodorizer / Air Freshener	<i>Cresol, phenols, formaldehyde:</i> Health problems, including cancer.	Baking soda in fridge, cat pan, trash can; potpourri; open windows and add more plants (natural air detoxifiers) to your home.
Dish Cleaner	<i>Non-biodegradable chemicals:</i> Harsh to skin	Washing soda, grated soap (in small pieces) 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
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	Use liquid detergents which don't have phosphates; use washing soda or Borax to give a cleaning boost instead of bleach; bleach only selected and necessary items; replace fabric softener with white vinegar.
Oven Cleaner	<i>Sodium Hydroxide (Lye):</i> See above.	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 / Mildew Remover	<i>Hydrochloric acid:</i> Burns skin and 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

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.