



Alternative Household Cleaning Supplies

General Household Cleaners

Product	May Contain	Possible Health or Environmental Hazards	Alternative Products
All-purpose cleaners	ammonia, glycol ethers	Eye and skin irritant; corrosive; poisonous; ammonia vapors can irritate lungs or trigger asthma; ammonia produces toxic fumes when mixed with chlorine bleach	Use Soap-water , vinegar-water with salt , Borax-water , or baking soda ; wipe dry. For stains on counters , squeeze lemon juice on the counter; leave for 45 minutes; sprinkle baking soda and rub with sponge or soft cloth.
Chlorine bleach	sodium, potassium, calcium or magnesium hypochlorite; chlorine	Eye and skin irritant; corrosive; produces toxic fumes if mixed with ammonia	Use baking soda. Use Borax-water to whiten and cut grease.
Disinfectants	VOCs	Eye, nose and throat irritant; mental fatigue; component in production of smog or ozone	Use Borax-water , or mix 3 tablespoons liquid soap, 2 cups water and 20-30 drops of tea tree oil.
Furniture cleaners and polish	diethylene glycol, dipentene, lauroyl peroxide, nitrobenzene, turpentine, petroleum distillates, other organic solvents, VOCs	Eye, nose, throat and skin irritant; mental fatigue, toxic; cause headaches and breathing problems; flammable; component in production of smog or ozone	Use lemon juice-oil , rub in, and wipe. Dry with clean cloth. Rub toothpaste on wood furniture to remove water marks. Hide wood scratches by rubbing with the meat of a walnut.
Glass and window cleaner	Ammonia, glycol ethers	Eye and skin irritant; corrosive; poisonous; ammonia vapors can irritate lungs or trigger asthma, ammonia produces toxic fumes when mixed with chlorine bleach	Try tap water using a clean lint-free rag; if glass is very dirty, use vinegar-water . To remove greasy fingerprints , use lemon-juice water . Use a clean lint-free rag or newspaper to dry glass.
Linoleum and NO-wax floor cleaners	ammonia	ammonia vapors can irritate lungs or trigger asthma, ammonia produces toxic fumes when mixed with chlorine bleach	Use vinegar-water . To cut grease , use soap-water , then rinse with vinegar-water . To prevent water spots , dry with a cloth. To remove black heel marks on floors , rub with a pencil eraser.
Linoleum wax and cleaner	diethylene glycol, dipentene, nitrobenzene, ozocerite, paraffin	Eye, nose, throat and skin irritant; mental fatigue; carcinogenic; toxic; component in production of smog or ozone	Dampen mop with oil soap, use vinegar-water to mop. Polish with club soda. Add 1/4 skim milk to rinse water for shine.
Room deodorizers and air fresheners	orthophenylphenol, paradichlorobenzene, VOCs, formaldehyde	Liver and nerve damage; eye, nose, throat and skin irritant; mental fatigue; component in production of smog or ozone	Place bowls of vinegar, baking soda, or vanilla extract in the room.
Rugs and upholstery cleaners	diethylene glycol, naphthalene, perchlorethylene, other organic solvents	Skin and eye irritant; affects nervous system; poisonous; toxic; carcinogenic; flammable; corrosive	For odors , sprinkle corn meal, baking soda or corn starch on dry rugs, let sit for 15 minutes, or overnight for serious odors, and vacuum. For spills , blot immediately with a clean rag or towel. For spots , use soap-water, spray lightly and blot with rag or towel. For grease , spot with baking soda, let the grease absorb and vacuum.
Wood floor cleaner			Use a damp mop of vinegar-water and dry immediately. Or, use vinegar-oil-lemon juice , rub on surface, and buff with clean, dry cloth. To remove black heel marks on floor , rub with a pencil eraser.

Kitchen

Product	May Contain	Possible Health or Environmental Hazards	Alternative Products
China			Denture tablets will remove coffee and tea stains from china, coffeepots, teapots, cups and mugs.
Dishwasher detergent	phosphates	Eutrophication of lakes and streams	As you pile dishes in the sink, sprinkle them with baking soda. Or, add a little baking soda to your dishwasher. Decrease the amount of detergent you use.
Oven cleaner	caustic soda, sodium hydroxide, lye, VOCs	Burns or irritates eye, nose, throat, and skin; mental fatigue; poisonous; corrosive; component in production of smog or ozone	For lightly soiled ovens, make a thick paste with water and baking soda. Scrub well with a white nylon pad. Add a small amount of liquid soap if oven is greasy. To remove spots , use very fine steel wool or a wet cleaning pumice bar (test for scratching).
Tea Kettle lime remover			Mix 1 cup apple cider vinegar, 2 tablespoons salt, and 1 cup water. Add to kettle; boil for 15 minutes, then let stand overnight. Rinse with cold water.

Bathroom

Product	May Contain	Possible Health or Environmental Hazards	Alternative Products
General bathroom cleaner	VOCs	Eye, nose, throat and skin irritant; mental fatigue; component in production of smog or ozone	To clean the sink, shower, bathtub, and tile grout, soak with <u>soap-water</u> , sprinkle baking soda, and scrub with a white nylon scrubbing pad and rinse. Use a stiff toothbrush or scrub brush on tiles. If there is any residue, rinse with <u>vinegar-water</u>.
Drain Cleaner	caustic soda, sodium hypochlorite	Corrosive; poisonous; can cause burns to skin and permanent eye damage	Unclog drain with plunger or snake. For very stubborn clogs, pour a cup of baking soda and a half cup of table salt, followed by a cup of white vinegar, down the drain. The vinegar causes the baking soda to bubble moving the grains of salt, which act as an abrasive on the clog. After 20 minutes, pour in a gallon of boiling water to wash away the clog. If the drain is still slow, use a plunger. To prevent clogged drains, put a strainer or filter in all drains; and pour boiling water down or put a handful of baking soda followed by hot water down the drain each week.
Mildew remover	bleach	Eye and skin irritant; poisonous	Apply hydrogen peroxide, then scrub with thin paste of lemon juice and borax. To prevent mildew, bacteria, and mold, eliminate moisture by keeping the area dry.
Scouring cleansers	silica, chloride	Irritant (silica in some cleansers can be dangerous if inhaled); poisonous; chlorine bleach produces toxic fumes if mixed with ammonia	Sprinkle baking soda or make a paste of soap-water and baking soda. Scrub with a damp white nylon cloth, sponge or very fine steel wool (check for scratching). Rinse with <u>vinegar-water</u> if necessary. Dry with a cloth.
Toilet bowl cleaner	paradichlorobenzene	Corrosive; poisonous; can burn skin and eye tissue; liver and nerve damage	Use <u>soap-water</u> or baking soda and a scrub brush. To remove stains, pour 1/4 cup of Borax and let sit for at least 30 minutes or overnight. Scrub bowl well and flush. To remove mineral deposits, scrub with bar of cleaning pumice (check small area for scratching). Or, try using 2 denture tablets in place of toilet bowl cleaner.

Metal Cleaners and Polishers

Product	May Contain	Possible Health or Environmental Hazards	Alternative Products
Aluminum pot cleaner	Acidified thiourea, ammonia, perchloroethylene, petroleum distillate	carcinogenic; poisonous; eye and skin irritant; combustible; flammable	Bring vinegar-water to boil in pot; continue boiling until stains are gone
Brass Cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	Saturate a sponge or soft cloth with vinegar and lemon juice, sprinkle fine table salt on sponge, and rub. Rinse thoroughly and dry.
Chrome cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	Wipe with vinegar. Rinse with water, and dry. For oil on the chrome, wipe with soap-water. Polish with dry cloth.
Copper cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	Saturate a sponge or soft cloth with vinegar and lemon juice, sprinkle fine table salt on sponge, and rub. Rinse thoroughly and dry.
Pewter cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	Polish with the outer leaves of a cabbage then buff with a soft cloth.
Silver polish	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	Rub silver with toothpaste or a paste of baking soda.
Stainless steel cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	See Aluminum Pot Cleaner	Use baking soda or <u>soap-water</u> mixed with baking soda. Rinse with <u>vinegar-water</u> , buff with a dry cloth.

Insecticides/Insect Repellent

Product	May Contain	Possible Health or Environmental Hazards	Alternative Products
General insecticide/ Insect repellent	carbaryl, chloropicrin, diazinon, dichlorvos, ethohehexadiol, mercuric chloride, naphthalene, paradichlorobenzene	Carcinogenic; poisonous; toxic; eye, skin and lung irritant; mutagenic; affects central nervous system; flammable	Spray plants evenly with <u>soap-water</u>, aiming directly at pests when possible. Or try chopping 1 small onion & 1 bulb of garlic, mix with 1 quart water, add 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper, let sit for one hour. Then add 2 tablespoons liquid soap. Mix well. When foam subsides, spray into spray bottle. Keep refrigerated; good for 1-2 weeks.
Ant repellent	See general insecticide/ insect repellent	See general insecticide/insect repellent	Pour a line of cream of tartar, boric acid, talcum powder, or chalk, or sprinkle red chili pepper, cayenne pepper, paprika or dried peppermint where ants enter house. (grow natural marigolds- beware they do attract Japanese Beetles.)
Roach killer	See general insecticide/ insect repellent	See general insecticide/insect repellent	Set out a dish of equal parts sugar and baking soda, or try chopped bay leaves and cucumber skins.
Moth repellent	See general insecticide/ insect repellent	See general insecticide/insect repellent	Use cedar chips instead of mothballs.
Flea killer/ repellent	See general insecticide/ insect repellent	See general insecticide/insect repellent	Combine orange and grapefruit peels, 3 cloves garlic, 1 tablespoon rosemary, and 1 pint of water in blender; blend until liquified. Heat mixture on low heat for 15 minutes. Strain liquid into spray bottle. Spray on pet and massage thoroughly into pet's coat (avoid eyes). Also try gradually adding brewer's yeast or garlic to pet's diet (check with veterinarian first). Vacuum furniture and carpet frequently. Clean pet's sleeping spots regularly and sprinkle with fennel, rue, or rosemary.
Fly repellent	See general insecticide/ insect repellent	See general insecticide/insect repellent	Basil in a bowl of water.

Laundry and Stain Removers

Product	May Contain	Possible Health or Environmental Hazards	Alternative Products
Laundry Cleaners	surfactants, phosphates	Eutrophication of lakes and streams	Add baking soda and reduce the amount of commercial detergent. If you use liquid detergent , add 1/2 cup baking soda at the beginning of the wash. If you use powdered detergent , add 1/2 cup baking soda during the rinse cycle.
Clothing stain removers	dichloroisopropyl ether, diethanolamine, enzymes, perchlorethylene, petroleum distillates, trichloroethylene, TSP, VOCs, other organic solvents	Carcinogenic; poisonous; toxic; headache; drowsiness; skin, eye, nose and throat, irritant; allergic reactions; hallucinations; confusion; mutagenic; combustible; flammable	See specific stain
<i>Ball-point pen stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Using methylated spirits, flush fabric repeatedly then rinse.
<i>Blood stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Soak in cold water for 10 minutes and then wash with soap. For more stubborn stains , mix cornstarch, talcum powder, or cornmeal with water and apply to stain. Allow to dry and brush away.
<i>Candle wax stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Stain can be removed with denture cleaning tablets in a container with warm water. Immerse the stained portion, add the tablets in the ration recommended on the package and let them dissolve. Soak the cloth until the spot disappears and wash as usual.
<i>Coffee stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Wash out with cool water, then vinegar. Rinse. Or, mix egg yolk with lukewarm water and rub on stain.
<i>Fruit stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Immediately cover stain with salt and soak in milk before washing.
<i>Grass Stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Soak with methylated spirits, allow to dry and then wash.
<i>Grease stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	If the spot is fresh , sprinkle thickly with baking soda, leave for a few minutes then brush off. For dried grease stains , wet fabric and rub baking soda into spot. If a stubborn stain , repeat and leave for a few hours then wash.
<i>Heavy Dirt Remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Rub with solution of 2 tablespoons washing soda in 1 cup warm water.
<i>Ink stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Soak stain in milk or remove with hydrogen peroxide, or soak in a mixture of cold water with one tablespoon of cream of tartar and one tablespoon of lemon juice.
<i>Lipstick stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Soak stain in milk for 30 minutes or rub with cold cream or shortening, then wash in warm soapy water. Also try putting a little glycerine on the stain and a few hours later wipe with eucalyptus.
<i>Oil stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Rub white chalk into stain before washing.
<i>Perspiration Stain Remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Sponge stain with <u>vinegar-water</u> or <u>lemon-juice-water</u> , and wash as usual.
<i>Red wine stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Pour salt on immediately, let it stand for a while, then soak in cold water and rub out.
<i>Rust stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Saturate stain with lemon juice and cover with baking soda and leave to soak. Also try vinegar.
<i>Scorch stain remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Boil scorched article in 1 cup soap and 2 quarts milk.
<i>Water stains on leather remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	Rub with a cloth dipped in equal parts of white vinegar and water.
<i>Wax and chewing gum remover</i>	see clothing stain removers	see clothing stain removers	To remove from fabric , place a block of ice onto wax or gum or place fabric in plastic bag and put in freezer. After 2 hours scrape off and sponge with eucalyptus.
Shoe Polish	nitrobenzene, turpentine	Eye and skin irritant; respiratory effects; toxic	Use a little olive oil.

How to make your own products:

Soap-Water	Mix vegetable-based liquid soap (such as castile soap) with water (about 2 tablespoons liquid soap with 1 quart of water). Use spray bottle or damp sponge or cloth.
Borax-Water	Mix 1/2 cup Borax with 1 gallon hot water. Use spray bottle or damp sponge or cloth.
Vinegar-Water	Mix 1/2 cup of white vinegar with 1 gallon water. Use spray bottle or damp sponge or cloth. For abrasive, use salt on the sponge or cloth.
Baking Soda	Use on non-scratch surfaces. Sprinkle baking soda on a wet sponge. If the baking soda leaves a residue, rinse with white distilled vinegar diluted in water, and dry with a cloth.
Lemon Juice-Water	Mix 1 tablespoon lemon juice with 1 quart of water. Use spray bottle or damp cloth.
Lemon Juice-oil	Mix 1 part lemon juice with 2 parts olive or mineral oil. Use spray bottle or cloth.
Vinegar-Oil-Lemon Juice	Mix 1/2 cup white vinegar, 1/2 cup vegetable or mineral oil, and 1 tablespoon lemon juice.

Sources:

1. Children's Health Environment Coalition Network, Household Detective website
2. City of Boulder, Department of Public Works, Stormwater Quality Program, "Household Hazardous Waste " brochure
3. City and County of San Francisco, 1996. "Clean it! Safer Household Methods that Really Work!" brochure
4. "Lean2" website
5. Lewis, Grace Ross. 1999. "1001 Chemicals in Everyday products." Second Edition.
6. Total Environment Centre, Australia website
7. U.S. EPA Office of Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances website

Not all products will contain the listed chemicals; also, some products may contain additional chemicals not listed here. Read the products label or contact the manufacturer for exact content.

One or more of the possible contents has been found to have these effects.

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 OR visit <http://www.countyofkane.org/pages/recycling>