

MOTHERS & OTHERS FOR CLEAN AIR

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# HEALTHY INDOOR BREATHING TOOLKIT

# CLEANING PRODUCTS



For more information about this research, visit  
[WWW.MOTHERSANDOTHERSFORCLEANAIR.ORG](http://WWW.MOTHERSANDOTHERSFORCLEANAIR.ORG)



## THE PROBLEM

Many traditional cleaning products contain harmful chemicals and fumes which are released into our homes each time we use them. Many cleaners release Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) into the air. VOCs are a group of chemicals that vaporize easily, causing indoor air pollution. Because VOCs are organic chemicals, they can cause short and long term health problems.



In some cases, levels of VOCs inside the home are measured up to **100 times higher** than levels outside the home. Growing evidence links cleaning products to the buildup of carcinogens (substances that cause cancer) in the body.



# WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

## TO MY OR MY CHILD'S HEALTH?

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Using toxic cleaning supplies can contribute to...

- Asthma
- Asthma Attacks
- Allergies
- Fatigue
- Eczema/ Bumpy Skin
- Difficulty Breathing
- Irritation of Nose and Throat
- Chemical Burns
- Birth Defects
- Low Birth Weight



Chemical Burn



Skin Allergies



Eczema / Bumpy Skin



Eczema / Bumpy Skin



# WHAT TO AVOID

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Since a lot of products do not disclose all of their ingredients it can be hard to know which ones are safe to buy. [Instead, try looking for products that say they are free of...](#)

- Phosphates Quaternary Ammonia Compounds (QUACS)
- Formaldehyde
- Sulfates & Sulfuric Acid
- Bleach
- Pine Oil Cleaners (difficult for kids with asthma)
- Citrus Oil Cleaners (difficult for kids with asthma)



Never mix your cleaning products, this is extremely dangerous. For example, mixing bleach with any product that contains *ammonia* (window cleaners and some floor cleaners) makes toxic gases called *chloramines*. Exposure to *chloramine gases* can cause throat and nose irritation, cough, shortness of breath, and nausea. Mixing bleach with any product that contains acid (vinegar, some window cleaners, dishwasher detergents, toilet bowl and drain cleaners, rust removers, brick/concrete cleaners) makes chlorine gas, which is very irritating at low levels and at high enough levels can cause death.



# WHAT TO BUY

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The Environmental Working Group (EWG) has a consumer guide where cleaning products are rated on a scale of "A-F" based on their safety for use inside the home. Look at EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning here to search over 2,500 products. Based on the EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning, Mothers & Others for Clean Air recommends the following products for easy shopping.



[Click here for the EWG Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#)

[Click here for the EPA's Safer Choice Guide](#)

However, we encourage you to do your own research to find what is best for you and your family. All products listed below can be found at Target and/or Walmart and fall within a reasonable price range. [The products listed here received an "A" rating on the Environmental Working Group's Consumer Guides, except for those specifically marked otherwise \(with B or C next to their name:](#)

## GENERAL SURFACE CLEANERS



**Baby Ganics All Purpose Surface Wipes**  
Fragrance Free **A**



**Seventh Generation Disinfecting Multi-Surface Cleaner**  
Lemongrass Citrus **A**



**Puracy Natural Multi-Surface Cleaner**  
Green Tea and Lime **A**

# WHAT TO BUY

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## CONTINUED

### GLASS CLEANERS



#### Everspring Glass Cleaner

Lemon and Mint **B**



#### Biokleen

Ammonium Free Glass Cleaner **B**



#### Method Glass and Surface Cleaner

Mint **B**

### BATHROOM CLEANERS



#### Lemi Shine Shower and Tile Cleaner **A**



#### Seventh Generation Emerald Cypress and Fir Toilet Bowl Cleaner **A**



#### Seventh Generation Disinfecting Bathroom Cleaner **A**

# WHAT TO BUY

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## CONTINUED

### LAUNDRY



#### Everspring Laundry Detergent

Free and Clear **A**



#### Seventh Generation

Ultra Power Plus  
Laundry Detergent  
Packs **A**



#### Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day Laundry Pacs

Lavender **B**

### DISHWASHING



#### Seventh Generation Dishwasher Detergent

Packs or Powder; Free & Clear, Lemon, or Ultra Power **A**



#### ECOS Dishmate Dish Soap

Free and Clear or  
Lavender **A**



#### ECOVER Dish Soap

Pink Geranium **B**

## CONTINUED

### ANTI-VIRAL/ANTI-BACTERIAL

A daily surface cleaner in the home does not need to be labeled "anti-viral" or "anti-bacterial". These products are harder on the body and they contribute to the problem of antibiotic resistance. Soap or detergent is a very good cleaner because it disrupts bacterial cell walls and is naturally antibacterial. If you feel you need to buy a sanitizer, please visit the EWG Guide to Healthy Cleaning.

**[Click here for the EWG Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#)**

For more information about cleaning versus sanitizing, please visit the CDC website:

**[Click here for the CDC Guide to Cleaning and Sanitizing](#)**

The following products are recommended to protect against respiratory viruses, including COVID-19:



**Seventh Generation  
Disinfecting Multi-  
Surface Cleaner**

Lemongrass Citrus **A**



**Lysol Hydrogen Peroxide  
Action Multi-Purpose Cleaner**

Spray or Wipes, Oxygen Splash  
or Citrus Sparkle Zest **A**



**Purell Multi Surface  
Disinfectant**

Fragrance free, Fresh, or  
Citrus **B**



# DIY SURFACE CLEANER

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One of the safest ways to clean your home is with good old fashioned soap and water. It does the job and skips all the plastic waste. If you prefer a spray cleaner consider making your own from ingredients already found in your kitchen mixed in a glass bottle. There are many recipes you can easily find online. We listed one here as an example of how you can make your own basic daily surface cleaner.

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 cup distilled white vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 20 drops essential oils: lavender, lemongrass, basil, orange, lemon (all have antibacterial or antifungal properties)
- Glass spray bottles

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pour all ingredients into a bottle.
2. Fit with a spray top.
3. Gently swirl the bottle to mix the ingredients together.
4. Use immediately or as needed.

## RECIPE NOTES:

Do not use this cleaner on granite or marble countertops as the vinegar will etch the natural stone. Be careful with cleaning rags/cloths and the clothes you're wearing because vinegar can also eat holes in cotton fabrics.

