Possible health effects

- **Carcinogenic, mutagenic, toxic to reproduction**
- **Impairs fertility, harmful by inhalation, swallowing and skin contact, and for the unborn child**
- **Disrupts the hormone system and the fertility**
- Very toxic to aquatic life

General Tips

- Read product labels and research the chemicals listed on product labels; you find useful links that will help you understand product labels on: www.projectnesting.org/
- Avoid products with fragrances. A clean bathroom should not smell at all.
- Avoid disinfectants and products claiming anti-bacterial action. Disinfectants are only needed in hospitals and homes of patients with suppressed immune systems. Ordinary cleanliness is sufficient to eliminate hazardous bacteria. Disinfectants may also contain comedogenic and teratogenic or even hormone-disrupting and allergic, long-lasting preservatives. Products containing antiseptic and anti-reddening agents are no longer free of hazardous substances and are no longer free of hazardous substances.
- Don’t trust manufacturers’ green claims. Use products that are certified by an independent third party you can trust and according to a clearly available, non-commercial standard you can understand, e.g. labeled with EU eco-label (EU BlueAngel), the German Blue Angel, the French NF Environmental or the Nordic Ecolabel (Swedish Swan).
- With an open purpose, a deep soaking milk and a citric acid based cleaner, you can clean the whole household.
- Detergents can’t be 100% environmentally friendly. Therefore use them as sparingly as possible and control the dosage especially for concentrates.
- Play it safe: avoid poisoning, store cleaning products out of children’s reach, don’t pour into other bottles, more at: childsafety.direct.gov.uk
- Avoid irritation and allergies. In the end try to avoid preservatives and high-pressure cleaners (WC cleaning, 150-bar, and cleaning agents, also bathroom environment, blowers, vacuum cleaners, automated floor cleaners, etc.)
- Avoid products with blue symbols. Prefer products with following labels:
  - **Pesticide-free**: ***Pesticide-free***
  - **Organic**: ***Organic***
  - **Bio**: ***Bio***
  - **Natural**: ***Natural***
  - **Biodegradable**: ***Biodegradable***
  - **EU eco-label (EU Blue Angel)**:
  - **German Blue Angel**:
  - **French NF Environmental**:
  - **Nordic Ecolabel (Swedish Swan)**:

- **Formaldehyde** (VOC, volatile organic compounds).
- **Nitrobenzene**.
- **Phthalates**.
- **Octylphenol (ethoxylates)**.

- **Triclosan**.
- **Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane (Galaxolide, Tonalide)**.
- **Octylphenol (ethoxylates)**.

- **Nitromusks, polycyclic musks**.

- **Use less toxic chemicals for a healthier home. Protect children and the environment!**

WECF is campaigning for a toxic-free environment. Support our work, become a Friend of WECF. For more information, please visit www.wecf.eu

WECF Guide

Household Cleaning & Care Products

- **Phthalates**
- **Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane**
- **Octylphenol (ethoxylates)**

Women in Europe for a Common Future

Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) is a network of more than 120 local women’s organizations in over 30 countries and working in over 100 different projects. WECF campaigns for a toxic-free, sustainable and just world for all women and girls. WECF is active on issues such as chemicals, agriculture, food, biotechnology, energy, climate, consumer and corporate rights, and gender equality.

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Women in Europe for a Common Future

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Hazardous chemicals

- **Formaldehyde**
- **Nitrobenzene**
- **Phthalates**
- **Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane**
- **Octylphenol (ethoxylates)**

Preservatives

- **Nitromusks, polycyclic musks**

Surfactants

- **Formaldehyde**
- **Triclosan**
- **Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane**
- **Octylphenol (ethoxylates)**

Air Freshener

- Floor
- Furniture
- Bath and toilet
- Dishes
- Laundry
- All-purpose, window, sanitary, floor, carpet and furniture cleaners

Perfumes

- **Formaldehyde**
- **Phthalates**
- **Nitromusks, polycyclic musks**

Solvents

- **Formaldehyde**
- **Triclosan**
- **1,2-dichlorobenzene**
- **2-methoxyethanol**
- **2-ethoxyethanol**
- **2-ethoxyethyl acetate**

Phthalates

- **Di(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP, Bis (2-ethylhexylphthalate)**

Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane

- **Octamethylcyclotetrasiloxane**

Octylphenol (ethoxylates)

- **Octylphenol (ethoxylates)**
**All-purpose cleaners**

There is a wide range of all-purpose cleaners. They contain strong ingredients, which can cause kidney and liver damage, chemicals, also known as bleach, and carcinogens like formaldehyde. Very often they contain preservatives, perfumes and colorants including hormone-disrupting chemicals and chemicals which can provoke skin sensitization and respiratory distress.

**Dishes**

Washing dishes by hand or in the dishwasher may contain strong ingredients, which can have better results with significantly fewer water consumptions and time. Machine dishwashers often contain environmentally harmful phosphates and conserving substances.

**Tips!**
- Avoid fabric softeners, stain removers additional pre-washing products.
- Wash your clothes at low temperature to save energy.
- Try soap nuts; they are ecologically and skin friendly.

**Laundry**

They may contain bleaches, synthetic scents, and sensitizing fragrances and surfactants. Detergent residues on clothes and bed sheets can be a cause of skin irritation, and lingering scents from scented products can cause respiratory reactions.

**Tips!**
- Avoid specific products for windows, grills, etc. Today you may contain high amounts of toxic chemicals.
- Be aware that chlorine can create poisonous chlorine gas if mixed with ammonia, which can cause respiratory reactions.
- Avoid sensitive scents when you are pregnant.
- Microfiber clothes can remove dust, germs and dirt without the need for chemical cleaning.

**Bath and toilet**

Many toilet bowl cleaners are often highly caustic and form toxic gases when mixed with water. They can contain 4, 4-dichlorobenzene, a carcinogenic chemical which can cause liver and kidney damage, hydrochloric acid, whose vapors can cause coughing and breathing difficulties, and chemicals which are severe eye, skin, and respiratory irritant, and can form carcinogenic gases.

**Tips!**
- Prevent deposits by cleaning with a brush.
- There is no need to use “disinfectant” or “anti-bacterial” products.
- Toilet bleaches and perfumed gels are artificial and contain ingredients which can cause skin allergies.
- Avoid sprays. The droplets can be slowly inhaled and irritate the lungs.

**Floor, carpet, furniture**

Floor, carpet, and furniture cleaning agents may contain cancer-causing persistent solvents and preservatives and hormone disrupting phthalates as well as sensitizing fragrances.

**Tips!**
- For cleaning such as floors, plastic, tiles, natural stone and for plastic and upholstered furniture a 1:2 mixture of vinegar and water or use vinegar alone.

**Air Freshener**

A lavender potpourri in the bathroom, a scented candle in the living room, or a “sea breeze” spray or an odor remover for cigarette smoke, a “sunshine” fragrance, a “fresh” scent and cooking smells. Instead of a positive impact on our well-being, air fresheners may contain carcinogenic chemicals and can cause allergies and respiratory reactions.

**Tips!**
- Open the windows. Eat out the bad air. An air freshener is better than any artificial product.

**Manufacturers**

Now also offer low toxic cleaning products.

**What is the problem?**

Cleaning your home increases the levels of chemicals in the indoor air, many times higher than the outdoor air in polluted cities. Many chemicals contained in household air fresheners and care products are the same as those used in heavy industry. Allergens such as latex are in summary consumed that long term low-level exposure to a cocktail of chemicals like the ones we breathe for adult, than for adult. Further, their organs are underdeveloped and are not fully developed. Another reason is their skin is more tender than ours. Finally, children also not fully developed. Another reason is their skin is more tender than ours. Finally, children and can’t process and purge what they take in as adults can. Their immune systems are also not fully developed. Another reason is their skin is more tender than ours. Finally, children and can’t process and purge what they take in as adults can. Their immune systems are also not fully developed. Another reason is their skin is more tender than ours. Finally, children and can’t process and purge what they take in as adults can. Their immune systems are also not fully developed.

**Why are children particularly vulnerable?**

Children are the most vulnerable to the toxic effects of conventional cleaning products and other household chemicals, why? They’re smaller than adults. Proportionately the same exposure or “dose” will be stronger for a child, than for adult. Further, their organs are underdeveloped and do not yet mature. Testing for human health effects is normally done on single chemicals. But in the real world, we are all exposed to a variety of chemicals every single day. You can decrease this risk by choosing safer products, and reduce your exposure. Most cleaning products are handled with everyday, less toxic, common, instead of expensive ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, vegetable oil, soap, borax and washing soda while an increasing number of manufacturers is now also offering less toxic cleaning products.