

# Chemical Hazards in Your Home



## candles

**Don't use scented candles.**

They are oil-based, and give off chemicals and smoke that often trigger asthma attacks and can also cause damage to the brain and lungs.

Asthma sufferers should **avoid** perfume, incense, and fireplace smoke, all of which can trigger an asthma attack.

**Avoid** imported candles which may contain lead.

**Choose 100% beeswax** candles. They last longer, and they are non-toxic.

## cleaners

**Most household cleaning products cause health concerns**, irritating skin, breathing, or allergies. Others are linked to chronic or long-term effects such as cancer. *These are especially dangerous for children.*

**Don't use:** Lysol Spray, Mr. Clean Multi-Surface Spray Cleaner, or Walmart Great Value All Purpose Cleaner with Bleach.

**Instead, make your own** (see back), or buy Honest Multi-Surface Spray, Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day All-Purpose Cleaner, or Method All-Purpose Cleaner.

## air fresheners

You think they are clearing the air of bad odors, but air fresheners—whether you spray them or plug them into the wall—can leave you sneezing and wheezing.

Fragrances in air fresheners can cause **asthma to flare up** or cause **allergic reactions**.

These products only mask odors. They do not get rid of them.

**Instead**, replace air fresheners with organic pure essential oils.

## liquid soaps

If you are using an anti-bacterial soap like Dial or SoftSoap, **STOP**. These are harmful to your health!

What's worse, they **DO NOT** kill germs any better than plain soap and water.

Anti-bacterial soaps contribute to the growth of "super bugs", cause health problems by killing good bacteria that live on our bodies, and pollute our environment.

**Instead**, use fragrance-free bar soap or liquid soaps like Method or Mrs. Meyer's.

For more healthy homes tips,  
visit [www.isles.org](http://www.isles.org)

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Self-Reliant Communities

# Safe and Healthy Cleaning Products

The recipes below use inexpensive, safe, and common household products, such as vinegar, baking soda, lemon juice, and hydrogen peroxide to help you maintain your home. You can receive a “Healthy Homes Kit” with these items and more recipes if you register for a lead test and healthy homes assessment from Isles. For more information, contact:

Cherie Hooks - 609.341.4756 or [chooks@isles.org](mailto:chooks@isles.org)

## Freshen

- Houseplants reduce odors in the home.
- Place bowls of fragrant dried herbs and flowers in the room.
- Baking soda or vinegar with lemon juice in small dishes absorbs odors.
- Simmer 1 tbsp of vinegar in 1 cup water when cooking to prevent odors.
- Simmer water and cinnamon or other spices on the stove.

## Deodorize

- To get smells like fish and onion off cutting boards and utensils, wipe with vinegar and wash in soapy water.
- Plastic food storage containers: soak overnight in warm water and baking soda.
- In-sink garbage disposal units: grind up lemon or orange peel in the unit.
- Carpets: Sprinkle baking soda several hours before vacuuming.
- Garage, basements: Set a sliced onion on a plate in the center of a room for 12-24 hours

## Clean

All-Purpose Cleaner:  
*1/2 cup white vinegar*  
*1/4 cup baking soda*  
*1/2 gallon water*

Mix ingredients; store and keep. Use to remove water stains on shower stalls, chrome fixtures, windows, mirrors...

Or, buy microfiber cloths, which lift dirt, grease, and dust without chemicals because they are able to penetrate and trap dirt. A good quality cloth can last several years.

## Window/Wall

Window Cleaner:  
*2 tsp white vinegar*  
*1 quart warm water*

Mix ingredients. Use crumpled newspaper or cotton cloth to clean. Don't use colored newspaper or clean windows when warm; streaks will show. Use vinegar as directed; too much will etch glass. All-Purpose Cleaner (left) also works well.

Walls and painted surfaces: Ink, pencil, crayon, or marker spots can be cleaned from painted surfaces using baking soda on a damp sponge. Rub gently, then wipe and rinse. To remove stickers, sponge vinegar over them several times, wait 15 minutes, then rub off.

## Floors

Vinyl and linoleum: Mix 5 drops of baby oil, 1 cup vinegar, and 1 gallon warm water.

Wood: Mix 1 cup vegetable oil and 1 cup vinegar, apply a thin coat, and rub in well.

Painted wood: Mix 1 tsp washing soda into 1 gallon hot water.

Carpet stains: Mix 1 cup white vinegar and 1 cup water in a spray bottle. Spray directly on stain, let sit for several minutes, and clean with a brush in warm soapy water.

Fresh grease spots: Sprinkle corn starch on spot, wait 15-30 minutes, then vacuum.

## Kitchen

Oven Cleaner:  
*3/4 cup baking soda*  
*1/4 cup salt*  
*1/4 cup water*

Mix ingredients. Moisten oven interior with sponge and water, then spread the paste, avoiding openings and bare metal. Leave overnight. Remove with a spatula, and wipe clean. For tough spots, rub gently with fine steel wool.

Scouring Powder: For surfaces that should not be scratched like stovetop or fridge, apply baking soda directly with a damp sponge.

Water Rings on Wood: Apply toothpaste or mayo to a damp cloth and rub the ring gently until gone. Then, buff the entire surface.

## Bathroom

Toilet Bowl:  
*1/4 cup baking soda*  
*1 cup vinegar*

Mix ingredients, pour into toilet, and let it set for a few minutes. Scrub and rinse.

Chrome fixtures: To remove lime scale, squeeze lemon juice on affected areas. Let sit for several minutes before wiping clean with a wet cloth.

Tub and Tile: Rub in baking soda with a damp sponge and rinse with water. For tougher jobs, wipe surfaces with vinegar before using baking soda. Use vinegar as directed.

Mold in bathroom tile grout  
*1 cup hydrogen peroxide (3%)*  
*2 cups water*

Mix ingredients in a spray bottle; use on areas with mold. Wait at least one hour before rinsing or using shower.