

# EWG'S TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY CLEANING ✨



**HERE'S A LITTLE KNOWN TRUTH:** The federal government does not require cleaning product manufacturers to disclose their ingredients to the public. **Often, you literally can't know what's in the bottle.**

These are products that you spray, wipe and scrub with all over your home, in places where you and your family live and sleep everyday. If you're in a home where these products are used, potentially dangerous chemicals can make their way into your body – through breathing, through the skin, and hand-to-eye or hand-to-mouth contact. **This is especially true for young children who crawl and explore with their hands.**

**SOME OF THE INGREDIENTS THAT AREN'T LISTED ON THE LABEL CAN BE TOXIC, EVEN WHEN USED ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTIONS.**

**HERE ARE EWG'S TIPS TO HELP YOU CLEAN UP YOUR CLEANING PRODUCTS. AVOID THESE PRODUCTS OR FIND HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVES:**



## ANTIBACTERIAL OR ANTIMICROBIAL CLEANERS

**Instead:** Plain soap and water and wet microfiber cloths are sufficient for everyday clean-up tasks. In cases where there is serious risk of illness transmission, some Environmental Protection Agency-registered antimicrobial disinfectants may be appropriate.



## AIR FRESHENERS

**Instead:** Open windows, weather permitting, and change the filters regularly in your HVAC system. You could also try simmering citrus peels, vanilla or cinnamon sticks in half a pot of water for an hour over low heat. This is a perfect way to help freshen indoor air.

## DRAIN CLEANERS

**Instead:** Consider a drain snake – they do a great job without any chemicals.



## FABRIC SOFTENERS

**Instead:** Try a dryer ball. They have no harmful chemicals and are reusable!

**CHOOSE PRODUCTS WITH A COMPLETE LIST OF INGREDIENTS ON THE LABEL.**



## BEWARE OF PRODUCTS WITH THESE INGREDIENTS:

**“Fragrance,” “parfum,” or “scent”** – Manufacturers can lump any combination of scent chemicals and additives under these catch-all terms. These mystery cocktails can trigger allergic reactions and worse: some contain suspected endocrine disruptors, like phthalates.

**Ammonia (ammonium hydroxide)** – Often found in all-purpose and glass cleaners, this ingredient can cause or worsen allergic reactions and asthma, and can irritate and burn skin, eyes and lungs.

**2-butoxyethanol (ethylene glycol monobutyl ether)** – 2-butoxyethanol is a solvent found in multipurpose cleaners and laundry, fabric and carpet stain removers and spot removers. It has been linked to anemia, and reproductive and developmental toxicity.

**Chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite)** – A common whitener and antimicrobial agent, sodium hypochlorite is often found in liquid bleach, disinfectants, automatic dishwasher gels and laundry care products. This chemical has been classified as a respiratory allergen and asthmagen, and it is also corrosive to skin and eyes.

**Ethanolamines (mono-, di- and triethanolamine)** – These ingredients are commonly used as detergents and pH controls in a broad range of laundry and cleaning products. They have been linked to asthma and respiratory irritation.

**Quaternary ammonium compounds (such as benzalkonium chloride and ingredient names containing “-monium chloride” or “ammonium methyl sulfate”)** – “Quats,” as they are often called, are commonly found in disinfectants and fabric softening products. They have been associated with causing or worsening asthma and respiratory irritation. They are possible human reproductive toxicants and teratogens, capable of causing birth defects.

**Triclosan** – Triclosan is an antimicrobial agent that manufacturers add to a variety of products, including brooms, brushes, mops, mop buckets, reusable household wipes, sponges and vacuum cleaner bags. This ingredient is a suspected endocrine disruptor and has been linked to liver toxicity. Avoid articles that claim protection from mold and mildew stains, odors and/or product deterioration. Products embedded with triclosan and other antimicrobials are not a substitute for routine cleaning and normal hygiene.

**Thiourea** – Found in metal polishes and tarnish removers, thiourea is linked to cancer.

**LUCKILY, YOU DON'T ACTUALLY NEED TOXIC CHEMICALS TO HAVE A CLEAN HOME.**

**Many safe and effective cleaning and deodorizing products are readily available in your local grocery or home goods store.**

Check out EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning, which rates more than 2,500 cleaning products based on health hazards, environmental concerns and level of ingredient disclosure, to see how your products fare. [ewg.org/guides/cleaners](http://ewg.org/guides/cleaners)