

Keep Your Space Healthier

How can you reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals? Start at home with simple changes to your cleaning practices.

Improve indoor air quality

For cleaner indoor air:

- Open windows to increase ventilation but only when weather and safety allows.
- Invest in an air purifier with a HEPA filter, or choose a filter with a <u>high MERV rating</u>¹ for your HVAC system. The higher the MERV rating, the better the filter is at trapping air pollutants.

Leave shoes at the door

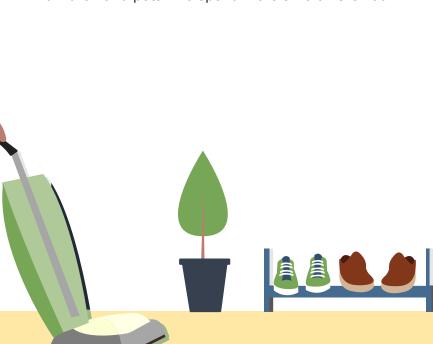
Our shoes can track toxic chemicals such as <u>arsenic and lead</u>² into our living spaces.

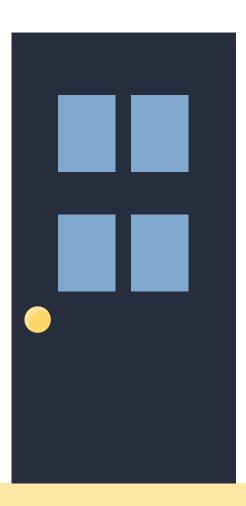
- Use a mat to reduce the amount of contaminants coming into your home.
- Set up a designated place by the door for your family and guests to leave their shoes.

Vacuum and dust frequently

Toxic chemicals can gather in dust and soft materials such as carpets.

- Frequently wipe surfaces with <u>microfiber</u>³ or damp cloths to remove dust.
- Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to capture all the small particles. This is especially important to protect children and pets who spend more time on the floor.





Choose Safer Cleaning Products

Shop smarter

Whether you're buying cleaners or the ingredients to make them, check what you already have at home. If you buy only what you need, you won't have to store extra products. In addition to helping the environment, this can save you money. If you no longer need a product, check your local garbage service, call 1-800-RECYCLE, or visit 1800recycle.wa.gov for safe disposal options.

Shop safer



Don't buy products with the signal words Danger or Poison.



Try to avoid products with the words Warning or Caution.



Choose safer products with third-party certifications like these:



Safer Choice⁴

Safer for people, pets, and the planet.



Design for the Environment⁵

Safer disinfectants and sanitizers.



Cradle to Cradle⁶

Visit their website to search for products, preferably platinum- or gold-certified.



Look for products labeled <u>fragrance free</u>.⁷

The terms fragrance free and unscented aren't the same.

- **Unscented** products may contain undisclosed harmful chemicals that mask odors from other ingredients.
- **Fragrance free** means neither fragrances nor masking scents are used in the product.



Do-It-Yourself Recipes

You can make your own cleaners that are safer for everyone. The ingredients are inexpensive and easy to find, plus you'll help protect your community and the environment by reducing sources of toxic chemicals.

Multi-purpose cleaner

Let the spray rest for 5 minutes on the surface (called **dwell time**) before wiping.

Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon liquid dish soap (not detergent)
- ½ cup white distilled vinegar
- 1½ cups water

Directions

Add all ingredients to a clean 16-ounce spray bottle. Put on the cap and shake well.

Glass cleaner

Use the multi-purpose cleaner recipe. Spray the cleaner on the surface and rub with a lint-free rag.

Or use this recipe:

Ingredients

- 1 cup vinegar
- · 1 cup water

Directions

Mix in a spray bottle, spray on glass surface, and wipe away.

For outdoor windows, use a sponge and wash with warm water and a few drops of liquid dish soap. Rinse well and squeegee dry.







Use Cleaners Safely

Protect your loved ones by cleaning when they're out of the room. Carefully read and follow the directions on all your cleaners before you use them. Be aware of the hazards associated with the product and follow recommended precautions. After using cleaning products, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

Ovens

Don't use this cleaner on self-cleaning ovens.

Ingredients

- 1 cup baking soda
- Water

Directions

Mix baking soda with enough water to make a paste. Apply to oven surfaces and let stand for 10–15 minutes before scrubbing. Use a scouring pad for problem areas and a spatula to get under large food deposits. You may need to scrub hard, but baking soda is not toxic to you, your family, or your pets.

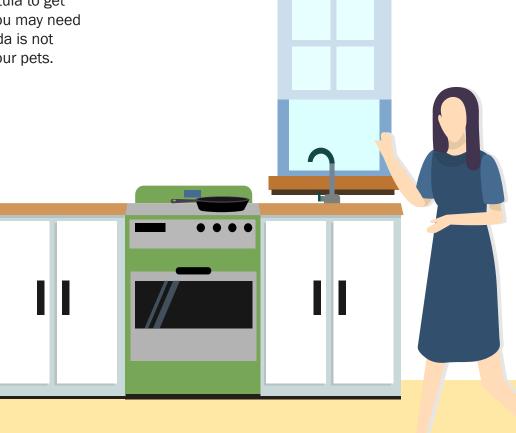
Microwaves

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
- 1 cup water

Directions

Mix vinegar and water in a microwavesafe container. Boil in the microwave. Let cool. The steam will loosen caked-on food, making it easier to clean.



Tubs, sinks, and toilet bowls

Ingredients

- · Baking soda
- · Liquid dish soap (not detergent)

Directions

You can use baking soda in place of your scouring powder. Sprinkle it on porcelain fixtures and rub with a wet rag. Add a little soap to the rag for more cleaning power. Rinse well with water to avoid leaving a hazy film.

For the toilet bowl, sprinkle the baking soda inside the bowl. Add a few drops of the soap and scrub with a toilet brush. Finish the outside surfaces with a rag sprinkled with baking soda.

Linoleum, tile, and woodwork

Ingredients

• Liquid dish soap (not detergent)

Directions

Squeeze a drop of soap on a wet washcloth and rub briskly. A washcloth will last longer and create less waste than a sponge.



No-wax floors

Ingredients

- ½ cup white distilled vinegar
- ½ gallon warm water

Directions

Mop floors with vinegar and water. No need to rinse! Just be sure to wring out your mop well—your floors should dry quickly.

Molds

Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon liquid laundry detergent
- 1½ cups warm water

Directions

Mix laundry detergent and water in a spray bottle. Spray on hard surfaces and scrub off all the mold, then let the solution dry completely.

Learn more about cleaning and preventing mold on the <u>Department of Health's</u> website.8





For More Information

Want to learn more? Check out these helpful webpages or contact us for more details!

- How do you know what's safe?⁹
- Choose safer products¹⁰
- Cleaning fact sheet¹¹
- Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting12

Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera for more about safer products & toxic chemicals in your home:



Contact

Safer Chemicals Team: Safer.Chem@ecy.wa.gov 360-407-6700



Image Credits

- Bathroom vector courtesy of pikisuperstar/Freepik and pch.vector/Freepik.
- Window vector courtesy of pch.vector/Freepik.

Endnotes

- 1 https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/what-merv-rating
- 2 https://ecology.wa.gov/HealthyActions
- 3 https://deohs.washington.edu/sites/default/files/brochures/microfiber-factsheet.pdf
- 4 https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products
- 5 https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-labels/dfe-certified-disinfectants
- 6 https://c2ccertified.org/certified-products-and-materials
- 7 https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/safer-choice-criteria-fragrance-free-products
- 8 https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/mold
- 9 https://ecology.wa.gov/Blog/Posts/June-2020/Safer-Choice-Because-you-shouldn-t-need-a-PhD-to-k
- 10 https://kingcountyhazwastewa.gov/en/households-disposal/households-safer-home-products
- 11 https://resources.oshce.uw.edu/1s6jug8/
- 12 https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/child-teen-health/child-care-health/bleach.aspx

