

HOUSEHOLD CLEANING

Alternatives to Disinfectants and Household Cleansers:

Disinfectants are substances meant to kill bacteria, germs, and other organisms. Many of these substances contain chemicals that may be dangerous to your health and our environment. Always look for non-toxic, or less-toxic products.

- Keep surfaces dry. Bacteria, viruses, and mold thrive in damp areas.
- Soap and hot water works well for most of your household disinfecting/cleaning needs.
- Vinegar and lemon juice are both good at cutting grease.
- Baking soda dissolved in hot water is a good cleaner. Sprinkle baking soda on tubs and sinks as a scouring cleanser.
- Use a mixture of half-cup vinegar in 1-quart of warm water as a general cleanser/disinfectant for surfaces and floors.
- Mix quarter-cup white vinegar in 1-quart of water and use with newspaper to clean glass.
- Choose vegetable oil-based soaps for handwashing dishes.
- To clean and disinfect your drains, pour boiling water once a week down the kitchen drain to keep it grease free. When needed, toss a handful of baking soda and half-cup vinegar down the drain. Cover to seal in the carbon dioxide gas bubbles as they loosen the gunk in your drain and let sit 15 minutes. Rinse with 2-quarts boiling water. Follow with plunger. Put a strainer on all drains as a preventative measure.

Mildew Removers

- Scrub spots with borax and water using a nylon-scouring pad.
- Mix half-cup borax and 1-gallon of water to clean mildew from a shower curtain. Or, try vinegar full-strength. Rinse off with water.

Alternatives to Bleach:

Bleach is a harsh and toxic chemical that is found in many household products. Chlorine bleach can produce a toxic gas if mixed with ammonia or acid-based cleaners (some toilet bowl cleaners contain acids). **DO NOT** mix bleach with any other chemicals. Here is what you can do to reduce the use of bleach, which can be found in toilet bowl cleaners, laundry detergents, laundry bleach, scouring powders, mildew removers and floor cleaners:

- Use baking soda to whiten clothes.
- When cleaning, use a non-chlorinated scouring powder (i.e. Bon Ami).
- Scrub with borax and water using a nylon scouring pad.

Floor Cleaners

- For vinyl and linoleum floors: mix quarter-cup white vinegar and quarter-cup baking soda in 1-gallon warm water.
- Use toothpaste to remove scuff marks on linoleum floors.
- Use Murphy's Oil Soap to clean wood floors. Dry immediately.

Toilet Bowl Cleaners

- Mix half-cup borax and 1-gallon of water. Use it to clean and deodorize.
- Make a solution with baking soda and water. Sprinkle it around the rim.
- Avoid toilet-bowl cleaners containing acids. Mixed acids and bleach release a toxic chlorine gas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please contact the Central Coast Environmental Health Project (CCEHP) at (805) 963-1622 ext. 111, or the Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner at (805) 681-5600. Information compiled by the Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo (ECOSLO) and the San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner's office on behalf of the CCEHP.