

GREEN WAYS TO DO DIRTY JOBS

Safe Alternatives to INDOOR & OUTDOOR Hazardous Products

The air inside a typical home contains chemical pollutants from cleaning products—**SOMETIMES UP TO 10 TIMES THE POLLUTION LEVEL OUTSIDE.**



Hazardous chemicals. The mere mention alarms us. Yet, we keep them under our sinks, in our medicine cabinets, and in our garages. In fact, we use them almost every day.

Almost all products can be misused in ways that make them dangerous. But some consumer products pose risks to human health and the environment even when used as intended because they contain hazardous chemicals. Known as hazardous products, they include cleaners, pesticides, home improvement products, and even some personal care items. These products may contain the same chemicals that strictly regulated industrial products and wastes contain.

Why use non-hazardous alternatives?

- 1.They work.
- 2.They pose little risk to the environment or people.
- 3.They reduce or eliminate the chance of accidental poisoning of children.

What are the risks?

Unintentionally, but regularly, we are exposed to hazardous products. We inhale them, we touch them, and sometimes we accidentally ingest them. Detergents can cause skin rashes, fumes from cleansers can cause dizziness and nausea, caustic products can cause burns, and extensive exposure to some toxic products can even be fatal. Long-term health impacts from regular exposure to hazardous products are largely unknown. Children, the elderly, pregnant women, and the sick often are most at risk.

Risks from unnecessary use & disposal

Hazardous products also pose risks to the environment. For example, pesticides can harm beneficial garden creatures and charcoal lighter fluid releases air pollutants. Many hazardous products should not be discarded in the trash or down the drain. Improper disposal causes health risks to humans and contaminates the groundwater, rivers, and lakes, harming plant and animal life. If you purchase a hazardous product, use it as directed on the label, follow disposal instructions, or dispose of it through the Montgomery County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program.

You can reduce these risks!

The way to reduce the risks is to avoid using hazardous products in the first place. For many jobs around the house or apartment there are alternatives that are significantly less harmful. These simple alternatives can save you money and reduce waste by using items you already have on hand.



The chemicals from AEROSOLS linger in the air and attach to dust particles that people and pets inhale. These chemicals from pesticides, cleaners and propellants can harm skin, eyes, and lungs and they can enter your blood stream.

Disposing of Hazardous Products In Montgomery County

Call 240-777-6564 or visit our website at: www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/HazardousWaste or www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/GoGreen

INDOOR

Check Labels!

Federal Law requires labels on all household hazardous products:

POISON OR DANGER Product is extremely flammable, corrosive or highly toxic. Small doses can be fatal to an adult.

WARNING Product is moderately toxic.

CAUTION Product is slightly toxic.

NONTOXIC An advertising claim, lacks regulatory definition.



FLAMMABLE Easily ignited



EXPLOSIVE Can explode when exposed to heat, sudden shock or pressure



CORROSIVE/CAUSTIC Can destroy living tissue; eyes are especially sensitive



POISONOUS Toxic when ingested by eating or drinking



POISONOUS Toxic when inhaled through lungs



POISONOUS Toxic when absorbed through skin

Risk



Potentially Hazardous Products & Alternatives

Aerosol Sprays

Use pumps or non-aerosol sprays or look for liquid or solid alternatives.

Air Freshener

Simmer 1 teaspoon of cloves or vanilla or a cinnamon stick in 1 cup of water for 5 minutes. Cloves in an orange keep a closet spicy smelling.

Decal Remover

To remove decals and sticker residue from glass, wood, china and walls, soak with white vinegar and rub off.

Drain Cleaner

Prevent clogging by using a screen or filter. Do not pour fats or bulky solids down drain. To unclog, use a plumber's snake or a plunger or call the plumber to clear blockage.

Floor Cleaners

Linoleum - Wash away dull, greasy film with a mixture of 1 cup white vinegar and 1 gallon of water.
Wood Floors - Mix equal amounts vegetable oil and white vinegar and apply sparingly. Rub in well.

Furniture Polish

For unfinished wood, mix 1 teaspoon lemon oil in 1 pint mineral oil and wipe on wood with reusable cloth rag. For finished furniture, mix 2 parts olive oil or vegetable oil with 1 part lemon juice. Polish with soft cloth. Or polish with a cloth dipped in olive, soybean, or raw linseed oil.

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Laundry Detergent

Use natural soap flakes or soap powder with 2 to 4 tablespoons washing soda or borax. If water is hard, add 1/4 to 1 cup white vinegar during the rinse to prevent soap from leaving a film. Vinegar effectively breaks down residual uric acid in baby diapers. *Note: Over time, residue collects in the washing machine. To remove, run your washer with 1/3 cup washing soda or 1 to 2 cups of vinegar before you convert from detergent to soap.* For either detergents or soap, add 1/4 to 1/2 cup baking soda per wash load to make clothes feel soft and smell fresh. You'll need less bleach this way. **NOTE: DO NOT USE VINEGAR IF YOU ADD CHLORINE BLEACH TO YOUR RINSE WATER. IT WILL PRODUCE DANGEROUS VAPORS.**



Metal Polish

Silver - Polish silver with non-abrasive toothpaste or baking soda paste. Brass, Bronze & Copper - Use a paste of equal parts salt, flour and vinegar. Or cut a lemon in half and rub on metal. Adding salt or vinegar can improve scrubbing ability. Rubbing with olive oil retards tarnish. Copper can be cleaned with Worcestershire sauce, catsup, or yogurt. Wash off and dry.



Moth Balls

Use cedar blocks or chips, lavender flowers, rosemary, mint or white peppercorns to repel moths. Sand cedar blocks with fine sandpaper to improve effectiveness. Make sure clothes are put away clean.



Oven Cleaner

Place a wide baking sheet or a rack underneath baking pan to catch spills. If a mess has occurred, clean spills as soon as oven cools, using steel wool and baking soda. A warm spill is much easier to clean. For tough stains, add salt as an abrasive. Wiping oven with white vinegar and water helps retard grease buildup. (For self-cleaning or continuous cleaning ovens, follow cleaning instructions.)



Porcelain Stain Remover & Tub/Tile Cleaner

Use a nylon pad or net and scrub with one of the following: Baking soda paste or cream of tartar paste. Or, rub with a cut lemon. For heavy soap residue buildup in showers, use a dry, very fine grade steel wool on dry tile to sand off the scum. Or, wipe with vinegar and sponge, then scour with baking soda.



Rug/Carpet Cleaner

To deodorize, sprinkle with baking soda and wait 20 minutes, then vacuum. To clean, vacuum then apply mixture of 1 quart white vinegar and 3 quarts hot water. Avoid saturating carpet backing. Dry and vacuum. (Not for wool rugs)



Stove Top Cleaner

Line pans under each burner with aluminum foil. Recycle and replace as needed. Clean bowls using baking soda as a scouring powder. Make sure foil is snug on drip pan and does not touch heating elements.



Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Sprinkle baking soda or borax on brush, then drizzle with white vinegar and scour with brush. Works best if toilet bowl can be drained.



Window Cleaner

Mix 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice in 1 quart water, spray on, and use newspaper to wipe dry; newspaper leaves no lint. For tough jobs, mix 1/2 cup sudsy ammonia, 1 pint rubbing alcohol, 1 teaspoon dishwashing liquid and enough water to make 1 gallon.

OUTDOOR

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Risk



Potentially Hazardous Products & Alternatives

Charcoal Lighter Fluid

Use an open-ended bucket—a “charcoal chimney”—and newspaper to light coals cheaply, quickly, evenly and without giving food a lighter-fluid taste.

Flea & Tick Powder

Wash pet and pet bedding with flea soap or citrus oil product. Fennel, rue, rosemary or eucalyptus seeds or leaves scattered around animal sleeping areas repel pests. Mix brewer’s yeast or garlic in your pet’s food or mix 1 teaspoon vinegar in 1 quart of pet’s drinking water.

Herbicides

Hand pull weeds, cover bed around garden plants with compost or mulch, or cultivate garden with a hoe. Cover garden with newspaper or plastic in the fall to prevent weed germination. In the spring, newspaper placed around plants/vegetables retards weed growth, retains moisture and decomposes.

Insecticides

Grow pest-resistant plants around vulnerable plants, e.g. marigolds around tomatoes. Attract birds, a natural form of insect control, with bird feeders and bird houses.

- Grow plants that repel pests: the onion family (especially garlic), herbs, (tansy, rue, yarrow, borage, thyme and mint) and the flowers of marigold, painted daisy, feverfew, nasturtium and white geranium. Scatter the leaves of these repellent plants around or tie to vulnerable plants.

- General all-purpose spray: Chop 1 clove of garlic and 1 small onion. Add 1 teaspoon pepper, mix with 1 quart water, and let steep for 1 hour or as long as 3 days before adding 1 tablespoon soap or detergent and then using. Keep up to 1 week.

- To kill soft-bodied pests like aphids, mix 4 tablespoons of liquid soap and 1 gallon of water. Spray.

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Mosquito Repellent

Burn citronella candles or citronella oil. Use alternatives to aerosol sprays.



Pesticides for Flies

Make fly paper: boil sugar, corn syrup and water together and spread on brown paper and hang. Or mix egg yoke, a tablespoon of molasses, and fine-ground black pepper. Set out in a bowl to attract and kill flies. To repel flies, scratch the skin of an orange, hang a cluster of cloves, or put potted mint or basil on the window sill.



Pesticides for Slugs & Snails

Plant onions and marigolds. Set out a shallow pan of beer at night or an overturned clay pot in the day to lure snails so they can be captured. Diatomaceous earth is also a good remedy.



Roach & Ant Repellent

Sprinkle powdered boric acid or diatomaceous earth inside cabinet edges, around baseboards and in cracks. Keep away from pets. Or mix boric acid with oatmeal, flour, dry cocoa, or mint jelly on aluminum foil to draw pests to the boric acid. Caulk or seal cracks through which pests enter the house. Kill visible ants with spray of 4 tablespoons of liquid soap mixed with 1 gallon of water.



Rodenticides

Cats and traps are time-tested ways to eliminate rodents. For mice, place instant mashed potato powder or buds in strategic place with a dish of water nearby. For humane, non-lethal traps, contact your local pet store or animal rights organization. The best way of preventing rodents from invading your house is to plug holes with caulk, cement patch, or other material, or even steel wool!

WARNING: Pesticides Are Poisons!



If a toxic pesticide is absorbed through the skin, inhaled, or ingested, acute poisoning can occur. Pesticides can irritate the skin, eyes, and lungs. They can cause headaches, nausea, muscle cramps and coma. Depending on the amount of exposure and your physical characteristics, pesticides can cause permanent tissue and organ damage, and even death.

Even when a pesticide kills the targeted pest, it can unintentionally kill other animals and plants. Improper use and disposal of pesticides contaminates drinking water and harms fish and wildlife.



For More Information

National Capital Poison Center

202-625-3333

Maryland Department of the Environmental, Hazardous Waste Program

410-537-3000

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Hazardous Materials Hotline

1-800-858-7378

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Pesticides Hotline

1-800-858-7378

Consumer Product Safety Commission

1-800-638-2772

Montgomery County

Department of Environmental Protection 240-777-7770

Division of Solid Waste Services 240-777-6400

Illegal Dumping Hotline 240-777-DUMP (3867)

Illegal Dumping Information 240-777-7770

Hazardous Waste Violations 240-777-7770

Hazardous Waste Disposal 240-777-6599 (or 6564)

Refuse Collection 240-777-6410

Recycling Collection 240-777-6410

Transfer Station 240-777-6560

Satellite Drop-off Sites 240-777-6560

Don't Dump—Donate 240-777-6564

ECOWISE 240-777-6564

Tire Disposal - MDE 410-537-3315

Business Recycling 240-777-6400

Multi-Family Recycling 240-777-6400

Scrap Metal 240-777-6560

Furniture Reuse 301-608-3504

Computer Recycling 240-777-6560



Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Solid Waste Services,
Hazardous Waste & Waste Reduction Programs
16101 Frederick Rd., Derwood, MD 20855

www.MontgomeryCountyMD.Gov/GoGreen