

Every day we eat, drink, breathe, and touch chemicals that exist around us. The chemicals can affect our health. Planned Parenthood GREEN CHOICES will give you the information you need to make choices for better health and a greener environment — for yourself, your family, and your community.

What should I know about cleaning products used at home or work?



- **Some are full of harmful chemicals and have strong smells.** Some may
 - burn your eyes, nose, or throat
 - give you trouble breathing
 - make you cough
- **Some may have chemicals that could increase your risk of cancer and other health problems.** Products that are most likely to be harmful include
 - drain cleaner
 - oven cleaner
 - toilet bowl cleaner



How can cleaning products affect my health?

- **It depends on**
 - how harmful they are
 - how long you have been near them
 - when in your life you have contact with them
- **Some can disrupt your hormones:**
 - Some may change the start of puberty in young teens.
 - Some may keep your body from making enough thyroid hormone.



- **If you're a *woman*, disrupted hormones may**
 - make it harder for you to get pregnant
 - change the pattern of your monthly period
- increase your risk of having a miscarriage
- make it harder for you to carry a baby to term
- increase your risk of breast cancer
- cause birth defects in baby boys (penis and scrotum)
- **If you're a *man*, disrupted hormones may**
 - lower your sperm count and make it harder to get a woman pregnant
 - increase your risk of cancer of the testicles

What are some safer ways to clean?

- **Make your own cleaning products.** You can use the following recipes:



- **Oven Cleaner**
Mix 5 tablespoons baking soda + 3 drops dish soap + 4 tablespoons white vinegar. Apply paste to walls of oven. Scrub, wipe clean, and rinse.

- **Drain Cleaner**

Pour ½ cup baking soda down the drain. Then pour ½ cup white vinegar down the drain. After the foam settles, rinse drain with boiling water.

- **Toilet Bowl Cleaner**

Sprinkle bowl with baking soda. Spray with white vinegar. Scrub with toilet brush.

- **Shower Mold and Mildew Remover**

Mix ½ cup 3 percent hydrogen peroxide + 1 cup water. Spray on area.

- **All-Purpose Cleaner**

Fill a spray bottle with 1 part vinegar and 1 part warm water. Shake, spray, and wipe with cloth. You can also add a few drops of essential oil to reduce the smell of vinegar.

- **Read product labels.**

- Stay away from products with labels that say, “caution,” “warning,” or “danger.”
- Never mix cleaning products.

- **Keep cleaning products away from children and pets.**

Call the National Poison Center (1-800-222-1222) if anyone has an accident with one.

Where can I get more information about cleaning products?

- **National Geographic – The Green Guide on Cleaning:**
www.thegreenguide.com/home-garden/cleaning
- **Women’s Voices for the Earth:**
www.womensvoices.org
- **Washington Toxics Coalition:**
<http://bit.ly/watoxicscleaning>