

Reduce pollutants in the environment and protect your health

In the garden

- Pull weeds by hand. Use a spray bottle with vinegar to kill stubborn weeds.
- Ask your garden centre how to improve your lawn without chemicals. Many municipalities have banned pesticides and herbicides.

Washing and fixing the car

- Soapy water poured onto the street will go into a storm drain and directly into creeks where it can damage young fish.
- Use less soap, and wash less often. Pour soapy water on the grass or into a sink to keep it out of your storm drain.
- When changing oil, use a drop cloth.
- Recycle used oil, containers, and filters at a garage near you.

Painting

Choose latex-based paints; they require less toxic solvents and thinners. Look for *low VOC paints* where available.

Dispose safely

- Don't put garden chemicals, medications, car oil, kitchen grease, or paint down the drain.

Need safe disposal information?

Contact the Recycling Council of BC
at www.rcbc.bc.ca
or call 604-RECYCLE
(604-732-9253).

More on safer cleaning alternatives

Read labels and look for products low in phosphates, chlorine, dyes and perfumes. Avoid cleansers with:



POISONOUS FLAMMABLE CORROSIVE EXPLOSIVE

Look online for more ideas. A good starting place is www.lesstoxicguide.ca. Check your library for books about natural cleansers.

Use alternatives
Use less
Dispose safely

Keep chemicals
out of the drain.

This publication is available online as a PDF
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Better Solutions

Keep chemicals
out of the drain—
we can show
you how!





Everyday items we use in our homes — like cleaning products, paint and medicine — contain chemicals that cannot be removed by the wastewater treatment plants.

Use alternatives

Natural cleansers have been used to clean homes for centuries because they work. They are less toxic, less expensive and better for you and the environment.

Baking soda scours and remove odours. Lemon juice and vinegar are natural disinfectants. Vinegar cuts grease. Borax, a natural mineral, cleanses and removes stains.



Warning:

- Use only tested recipes; mixing some chemicals together, such as bleach and ammonia, forms a toxic gas
- Keep all cleansers stored away from children and pets
- Do not use old food containers to store cleansers
- Label all cleansers and list ingredients.

Multi-purpose cleanser

For kitchen, bath, counters, garbage bins and more:

- ½ cup baking soda
- ½ cup vinegar
- 4 cups water

Mix together. Let the foaming stop. Start cleaning.

Windows and mirrors

Use straight club soda or 1 cup vinegar or lemon juice in 3 cups water. Wipe with cotton terry-cloth. Dries crystal clear.

Floors

Mix ½ cup vinegar in 16 cups warm water. Like scent? Add a few drops of pine or eucalyptus essential oil from a health food store. Get your mop, and you're ready.

Easy toilet cleanser

- ½ cup baking soda
- ¼ cup white vinegar
- 10 drops tea tree essential oil

Combine ingredients. Add to the bowl. Brush, and you're done.

Drain cleanser

Pour a handful of baking soda and 1 cup of vinegar into the drain. It will foam briefly. In 15 minutes, pour down a kettle of hot water.

Warning: Do not use vinegar after using a commercial drain cleanser. It can form toxic fumes.

Don't pour cooking grease and oil down the drain. It can clog your pipes and city pipes. Instead, let it cool and put it in the garbage.

Whitening scouring powder – for tiles and grout

- 1 cup baking soda
- 2 teaspoons of cream of tartar
- ⅓ cup borax
- ¼ cup grated lemon peel

Combine ingredients. Scrub with a damp cloth, and rinse away.



Use less

Laundry

Replace bleach with 1 cup of baking soda in the wash cycle or use non-chlorine, chlorine-free or hydrogen peroxide bleaches. To replace fabric softener, add ½ cup vinegar to the rinse cycle.

Use half the soap!

Surfactants are the cleaning agent in soaps. Laundry detergent, shampoo, dish soap. . . if it suds, it contains surfactants. Although surfactants do our cleaning, they also harm young fish and other aquatic life.

Can I use less soap and still get good results?

Yes. Our region has naturally soft water, which means it has fewer minerals in it. Soap works really well in soft water. You can use half the amount the package recommends, or less, and still get good results.

Half the soap = clean clothes, less money and healthier fish. . . a triple win!



It's not just us! Worldwide, people are using less soap.