

Cleaning Product Ingredient Right-to-Know



The Toxic Secret in Cleaning Products

We are surrounded by a vast array of different cleaning products: dish soaps, laundry detergents, air fresheners, all-purpose cleaners, disinfectants, glass cleaners, stain removers and more. Yet no federal or state law requires cleaning product companies to list all ingredients on the product label.

Some chemicals found in ordinary cleaning products are known or suspected to cause cancer, birth defects, asthma and other serious health effects. Biomonitoring studies – measuring chemicals in people's bodies – have found many of these toxins in blood, urine and breast milk, as well as in the umbilical cord blood of newborns. Without ingredient lists on labels, it's nearly impossible for consumers and workers to avoid harmful exposure.

Cleaning products may contain chemicals linked to:

- **Cancer** or reproductive harm: including phthalates, styrene, synthetic musks, trichloroethylene, ethylbenzene, petroleum distillates, 2-butoxyethanol, and thiourea.

- **Asthma:** including alkylphenol ethoxylates, quaternary ammonium compounds, and glutaraldehyde.

- Asthma is much more prevalent in lower income communities.

- Fumes from some cleaning products can induce asthma in otherwise healthy

individuals and exacerbate asthma in people who already have the disease.

- According to the U.S. EPA, cleaning products contribute to concentrations of many common pollutants that are 2 to 5 times higher inside homes than outside.

- **Allergens:** including limonene, hexyl cinnamal, citronellol, butylphenyl methylpropional, linalool, geraniol, benzyl salicylate.



Disproportionate Impact on Workers, Women, and People of Color

- Workers such as janitors, maids and housekeepers are exposed to the chemicals in cleaning products every time they go to work. This can mean 40 hours of exposure to unknown, potentially harmful chemicals every week.
- About half of the nation's janitors and two thirds of maids and housekeepers are Latino or African American.
- Women account for 9 out of 10 maids and housekeepers.

Ingredient Transparency is the First Step Towards Choosing Safer Alternatives

- Ingredient disclosure on product labels is mandatory for all food, cosmetics and drugs – but not cleaning products.

The public has a right to know what chemicals they are using in their homes and workplaces. Cleaning product manufacturers should be required to label ingredients on product labels and product websites.



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