The Wellness Family

Dr. Sherri Raley and Dr. Katie Chenkus Keep You Informed

Cleaning Green

Walk down the cleaning products aisle at your local grocery store and it may be a bit overwhelming. There is a cleaning product for every surface of your home and rarely will they be recommended for use in any other space. Bathroom cleaners are different than kitchen cleaners and floor cleaners can't be used on windows; there are even specialty cleaners for appliances, ovens, microwaves, etc.

Beyond the overwhelming quantity and expense, don't forget the toxic factor. Almost every single product on those shelves will contain some kind of toxin or dangerous substance. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has noted that many household cleaners contain volatile organic compounds or VOCs, such as formaldehyde and other harsh acids. This is important because exposure to VOCs can lead to several symptoms including: eye, nose and throat irritation; headaches; nausea; liver, kidney and central nervous system damage; loss of coordination and more.

Since some of these chemicals have even proven to be carcinogenic, it's time to toss those toxins and start cleaning green.

The Top Ten Ingredients

The first argument against making this change to green is that it's just more expense to replace everything in the cleaning cabinet at once. However, this just isn't the case. Many of the ingredients recommended for cleaning green are already in the average kitchen.

White Vinegar – This is a stringent but safe antifungal that will kill germs and bacteria.

Baking Soda – This will work as a gentle scouring powder and eliminates odors.

Club Soda – Works well as a stain remover and polisher.

Olive Oil – Can replace expensive furniture polishers.

Lemon Juice – Can work well as a non-toxic bleach alternative, a stain remover and will help to cut grease.

Hydrogen Peroxide – At 3% concentration this works well as a non-toxic bleach, a stain remover and a disinfectant.

Corn Meal – Works wonders when poured on a carpet spill, allowed to dry and then vacuumed up.

Liquid Castile Soap – The word "Castile" means that it is vegetable-based and not animal-based. This cuts grease and can replace any all-purpose cleaners while working as a disinfectant.

Borax – Also known as sodium borate, it eliminates odors, removes dirt and acts as a possible disinfectant and an antifungal; but it can be toxic if swallowed so use with care around children and pets.

Essential Oils – These can be added to any cleaning recipe for many reasons. First is the pleasant smell; typical cleaning products have a strong, stringent odor which can be quite unpleasant. Secondarily, some essential oils actually have antibacterial, antifungal and insect-repelling properties. Some of these include: eucalyptus, peppermint, lemongrass, lavender and green tea, just to name a few.

Essential oils are best purchased from a local health food store or holistic healthcare provider since they can also make recommendations based on aromatherapy choices and safety precautions for pregnant women. Some essential oils can induce allergic or harmful reactions if ingested or put directly on the skin so it's wise to consult with someone knowledgeable before including these in your cleaning recipes.

Since some products may contain carcinogenic chemicals, it's time to toss those toxins and start cleaning green.

Putting These Ingredients to Work

The simple household items can be combined to create safe, green cleaning product alternatives for every area of the home.

For Glass – Just ¼ cup of vinegar with 1 quart of water in a spray bottle can replace any name brand glass cleaner. Spray on glass and wipe clean with old newspaper or a lint-free cloth.

For Bathroom or Kitchen Tile and Countertops – Combine 2 parts vinegar and 1 part baking soda with 4 parts water. Apply with a sponge, scour then wipe it away. Note that club soda works wonders on plumbing features.

Floors – Mix 4 cups of white distilled vinegar with about a gallon of hot water. For a nice aroma consider adding a few drops of pure peppermint or lemon oil. The vinegar smell should dissipate quickly after damp mopping the floors and leave behind on the scent of the oil.

Wood Furniture – Mix equal parts of lemon juice and olive oil. Apply a small amount to a cloth then rub onto the furniture in long, even strokes.

Mold and Mildew Cleaner – Just wipe with straight vinegar.

For Toilet Bowls – Wipe the outside of the toilet with straight vinegar. Sprinkle a toilet brush with baking soda to scrub on a regular basis but occasionally disinfect by scrubbing with borax instead.

Disinfecting – Mix 2 teaspoons of borax, 4 tablespoons of vinegar, 3 cups of hot water and ¼ teaspoon of liquid castile soap to create a safe, non-toxic disinfectant. It can be wiped directly on surfaces with a dampened cloth or can be sprayed on and then wiped clean.

The majority of these combinations can be stored for long periods of time but it may be wise to start out with cutting a few of the recipes in half. It's difficult to know how much will be used in the average home as some may be conservative in their use while others may be liberal. Also note that olive oil ages poorly and when used as a furniture polish may leave an unpleasant odor if it's too old.

Other Indoor Toxins

Indoor VOC levels are often two to five times greater than outdoor levels due to the many household products that emit toxins. While cleaning products are clearly going to be one of the biggest culprits, recent studies have shown that the majority of synthetic, brand-name air fresheners are toxic as well, adding to an already high toxicity level in most homes.

For the health and well-being of everyone in the home, stop using store-bought, brand-name air fresheners and make a few of the following changes.

First, consider baking. Store-bought baked goods aren't any better than store-bought air fresheners. Kill two birds with one stone and bake chocolate chip cookies using organic ingredients. The kids will be happy and the house will smell yummy.

Second, purchase some indoor plants. While they will not greatly affect the smell, broad green leaf plants are good for filtering interior air. Peace Lilies are a good choice.

Third, boil some fresh herbs. A combination of cinnamon, cloves, orange peel, or any other similar herb will be a pleasant scent.

Finally, essential oils can work as both a pleasant scent and aromatherapy. Sprinkle an essential oil on a cotton ball and stash it in the corner of a room. Be sure to keep it out of reach of both children and pets as they are strong and can be toxic if swallowed. Lavender is a relaxing scent that is great for bedrooms. Cinnamon, clove and citrus oils work well in the rest of the house. This can also be used in the car; a couple drops of peppermint can be a refreshing scent when driving.

The Chiropractic Factor

There are three causes of subluxation: physical, emotional and chemical. Yes, chemicals in our environment can actually work against our regular adjustments and wreak havoc with our central nervous system.

Be sure to ask your Family Wellness Chiropractor for any recommendations on how you can protect your family from these three common stressors.

Dear Patient,
The doctors of Vitality Chiropractic are dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

This newsletter is provided to you by:

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