



Hidden Household Nightmares

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Everyone wants a warm and welcoming home, but not everyone realizes that their home is loaded with chemicals affecting everyone inside. Today, I'm going to take you through the top 5 hidden household chemical nightmares and how to solve them.

1. Wearing Shoes in The House

It seems harmless, but when you wear shoes in the house, you drag in pesticides and other junk. Most public bathroom floors contain about 2 million bacteria per square. A recent study showed 39 percent of shoe sole samples were contaminated with bacteria *Clostridium difficile*, a public health threat that is now resistant to a number of antibiotics.

This can be solved by simply taking your shoes off at the front door; a quick fix that's totally worth it.

2. Using Mainstream Cleaning Products

The chemicals in commonly used household cleaning sprays could be damaging your lungs. Researchers found that people who used cleaning sprays as little as once a week for 20 years suffer similar decline in lung function as those who smoke a pack a day for 10 to 20 years. Irritants in cleaning supplies are linked to long-term health damage, including cancer and reduced lung function and short-term effects like increased asthma and reproductive problems.

Luckily you can clean your home effectively and safely using natural ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, coconut oil, lemons and castile soap. There are somewhat green cleaning companies that sell safer products as well, but I strongly recommend thoroughly looking into their ingredients before purchasing.

3. Candles

Many candles are made of paraffin wax, which creates highly toxic benzene and toluene when burned (both are known carcinogens aka cancer causing). Paraffin is a petroleum waste product and the toxins released from paraffin candles are the same as those found in diesel fuel fumes. Many scented candles also have wicks that contain heavy metals like lead, and even a few hours of burning them can create levels of airborne heavy metals that are much higher than the acceptable limits.

The solution is to make your own candles with ingredients like beeswax. For the scent, use essential oils and go with a cotton wick. If you find a company that meets these standards, go head and buy those candles.

4. Air Fresheners

We've all used them but they actually don't do anything to eliminate odor, only to mask it. Companies are not legally required to disclose what their air fresheners are made of. Ingredients commonly used in air fresheners include phthalates which are linked to birth defects and hormone disruption, and synthetic musks, which are linked to allergies and hormone disruption.

There are no green certifications for air fresheners which means there aren't really green companies that sell air fresheners. Your best bet is to diffuse natural, essential oils, the same kind you would make your candle with. Use fresh air to eliminate odors by opening a window and running a fan. A box of baking soda is also a safe way to reduce odors.

5. Dryer Sheets

Dryer sheet manufacturers aren't required to list ingredients, including the chemicals used in "fragrance" blends. To understand what is actually in dryer sheets, scientists have been studying sheets and dryer vent exhaust. They found seven hazardous air pollutants and 25 volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Some of these, including acetaldehyde and benzene, are not safe at **any** level. Acetaldehyde is potentially carcinogenic to humans and adversely impacts the kidneys, nervous and respiratory systems. It's regulated in outdoor emissions, but in home use, any amount can be used. A 2016 study showed 12.5 percent of people blamed scented laundry products spewing from dryer vents for health issues like runny noses, asthma attacks, skin issues, migraines and more.

The simple solution is ditching the dryer sheets. Honestly, we don't need them. Look for plant based unscented detergents. You can even make your own handmade laundry soap!

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