

Safe Cleaning for People with Asthma

Cleaning with non-toxic cleaners is a great way to both clean your home and manage asthma. These recipes are easy, cheap and non-polluting. Here are also some suggestions for cleaning and keeping away other asthma triggers.

Clean the house when the person with asthma is NOT home if possible!

Dust

- Organize clothes and toys in clear plastic trash bags or bins.
- Wash stuffed animals in hot water and dry them on a high heat setting. Seal toys in a plastic bag and place them in the freezer for at least 5 hours or overnight to kill dust mites.
- Wash all bedding in hot water and then dry it on a high setting every few weeks.
- Vacuum and dust with a damp cloth at least once a week, preferably with a HEPA vacuum.
- Take off shoes before entering the house. It cuts down contaminants that can be vacuumed and disbursed through the house.

Toilet Cleaner

- Baking soda
 - Liquid castile soap*
- Sprinkle baking soda inside the bowl. Squeeze in a couple of drops of soap also. Scrub with a toilet bowl brush and finish outside surfaces with a rag sprinkled with baking soda.

Tub and Sink Cleaner

- Baking soda
 - Liquid castile soap*
- Use baking soda in place of your scouring powder. Sprinkle it on porcelain and rub with a wet rag. Add a little soap to the rag for more cleaning power. Rinse well to avoid leaving a hazy film.

Furniture Polish

- Mix olive oil and white vinegar

Stain Remover

- Borax, shaving cream, or hydrogen peroxide

Drain Cleaner

- Baking soda
- Vinegar
- Boiling Water

This recipe will free minor clogs and help to prevent future clogs. Pour ½-cup baking soda down th drain first, then ½-cup of vinegar. Let it fizz for a few minutes. The, pour a teakettle full of boiling water down drain. Repeat if needed. If the clog is stubborn, use a plunger. If the clog is very stubborn, use a mechanical snake.

Mold and Moisture

- When showering or bathing, use the bathroom fan; allow it to run for 15 minutes or longer OR open a window.
- Replace or wash moldy shower curtains.

Air

- Throw out harsh chemical cleaners and scented household cleaners. Use mild, unscented detergents for clothes and avoid fabric softeners.
- Stop using air fresheners and deodorizers.
- Do not smoke cigarettes in the home.

Oven Cleaner

- Baking soda
- Water
- Scouring pad

Mix 1-cup of baking soda with water to make a paste. Apply to oven surfaces, and let stand a little while. Use a scouring pad for scrubbing most surfaces. A

spatula or bread knife is effective to get under large food deposits. This recipe will require “Elbow Grease.” Try spot cleaning your oven regularly. Do not use this cleaner on self-cleaning ovens.

Window and Mirror Cleaner

- Vinegar
- Water

Put ¼-cup vinegar in a spray bottle and fill to top with water. Spray on surface. Rub with a diaper or other lint-free rag, or sheets of newspaper. For outdoor windows, use a sponge and wash with warm water with a few drops of liquid castile soap in it. Rinse well and squeegee dry.

*If liquid castile soap is unavailable, Murphy’s Soap is a great substitute.

[All recipes from The American Lung Association of Oregon’s “Suggestions for Green Cleaning”]

Pests

- Avoid saving boxes, paper bags, or newspapers in piles.
- Don't leave open food or dirty dishes lying around the kitchen.
- Keep counters free of crumbs or spills.
- Keep garbage containers closed.
- Rinse recyclables before putting them in the bin.
- Do not use pesticides. Use traps or baits and seal places where insects can enter your house.