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Spring Cleaning the Natural Way

It is that time of year when the weather gets nicer; we open our windows to replace the stale, winter air, let a fresh breeze into our house, and contemplate (maybe even plan and begin) spring cleaning!

A cleaner living space may conjure up thoughts of better health. However, the household cleaners you use may have a different impact on your well-being.

The Dangers of Cleaners

Most of us are likely unaware of the harmful chemicals in some household cleaners that can have a detrimental effect on our health, our family, our pets, and the environment.

Studies have linked household cleaners to asthma and respiratory problems, cancers, elevated birth defects when pregnant women are exposed, immunity concerns, and hormone production. Sadly, this area is under-researched.

In Canada, household cleaning products are classified as consumer products and are covered under the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act (CCPSA), unlike hand soaps and body soaps which are considered cosmetics and are regulated under the Food and Drugs Act (FDA). Products falling under the FDA are typically subject to various regulatory requirements – however, Health Canada has eased up on some requirements due to the heavy demand during COVID to include products that were not fully compliant with existing regulatory requirements.

I found a great 'Canada-made' PDF summary of the requirements for listing ingredients under Canadian regulations: [*The Dirt on Cleaners: Toxic Ingredients in Cleaning Products*](#). The link includes advice on how to safely use products, and how to mix your own natural cleaning products (see more on this below!)

These two links provide more information on the types of chemicals, where they are found in household products, and the health impacts:

[Cleaning Supplies and Household Chemicals](#)

[Cleaning product chemicals affecting your health](#)

A Healthier, Environmentally Friendlier Way to Clean

There are alternatives to using harmful chemical products. One option is to use natural ingredients and products to make our own cleaners.

I found many different websites listing natural cleaning recipes (see Sources at the end of this article).

[Better Homes & Gardens](#) and [Oprah Daily](#) offer great ideas on how to produce your own homemade cleaners, including:

- Bathroom cleaners
- Carpet deodorizer and stain remover
- Laundry detergent and rinse aid
- Grout cleaner
- Window and glass cleaner
- All purpose cleaner
- Dusting spray
- Hardwood floor cleaner
- Stainless steel cleaner
- Oven and microwave cleaners
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Air fresheners

Since, as busy folk, we may be reluctant to mix our own cleaners, a second option is to purchase healthier cleaners. Good news! There are more and more companies out there offering natural, environmentally safe options. I googled: *environmentally friendly cleaning products Canada* to learn more about the vendors and the products available. Here are the top five that showed up in the Google search:

1. [Eco Max](#)
2. [Simply Beautiful Box](#)
3. [BuzzFeed:19 Eco-Friendly Versions of Cleaning Products You Use All The Time](#)
4. [Well.ca](#)
5. [GreenCricket.ca](#)

Happy, healthy, spring cleaning!

Sources:

Chemical dangers in cleaners

<https://www.cmaj.ca/content/192/7/E164>

<https://www.bcpc.org/resource/cleaning-products/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-safety/household-chemical-safety.html>

https://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/content/cleaners_and_health/

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/public-advisory-expedited-access-to-household-cleaning-products-hand-soaps-and-body-soaps-to-help-fight-covid-19-834478842.html>

Natural cleaning products

<https://www.realsimple.com/home-organizing/green-living/natural-cleaning-recipes>

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/cleaning/tips/a24885/make-at-home-cleaners/>

<https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/g30666676/homemade-cleaners/?slide=13>

<https://www.bhg.com/homekeeping/house-cleaning/cleaning-products-tools/homemade-cleaners/>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Morandini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rochelle Morandini

Member Health & Well-Being, Director

If you would like to contribute or have ideas about what you would like to see in the ReFresh series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.