

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

Solutions in your community
Anne Arundel County



Window Cleaner

Wash windows or glass with a mixture of equal parts of white vinegar and warm water. Dry with a soft cloth.

Tub and Tile

- Add 2 tablespoons baking soda to your bath water and you won't have to worry about ring-around-the-tub! Your bath water will be soft, too.
- Sprinkle baking soda like you would scouring powder. Rub with a damp sponge. Rinse thoroughly. To remove film buildup on bathtubs, apply vinegar full-strength to a sponge and wipe with vinegar first. Next, use baking soda as a scouring powder, rinse thoroughly with clean water.
- To clean grout, put 3 cups baking soda into a medium-sized bowl and add 1 cup warm water. Mix into a smooth paste and scrub into grout with a sponge or tooth brush. Rinse thoroughly and dispose of leftover paste when finished.



Toilet Bowls

Sprinkle baking soda into the bowl, then drizzle with vinegar and scour with a toilet brush. This combination both cleans and deodorizes.

CAUTION: IF YOU DO USE BLEACH TO CLEAN YOUR TOILET BOWL, NEVER MIX BLEACH WITH VINEGAR, TOILET BOWL CLEANER, OR AMMONIA. The combination of bleach with any of these substances produces a toxic gas which can be hazardous.

Drains



Pour 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain. Add 1/2 cup white vinegar and cover the drain if possible. Let set for a few minutes, and then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain to flush it.

Laundry

- Eliminate soap residue by adding 1 cup of white vinegar to the final rinse. Vinegar also breaks down uric acid, so adding 1 cup vinegar to the rinse water is especially good for babies' clothes. **DO NOT USE VINEGAR IF YOU ADD CHLORINE BLEACH TO YOUR RINSE WATER. IT WILL PRODUCE HARMFUL VAPORS.**
- To make your clothes feel soft and smell fresh add 1/4 to 1/2 cup baking soda per wash load. You can cut the amount of chlorine bleach used in your wash by half when you add 1/2 cup baking soda to top loading machines or 1/4 cup to front loaders.



Damp Cleaning to Reduce Dust

2 buckets (1 for wash water, 1 for rinse water)
1 string mop
Paper towels or sponges
Rubber gloves
Detergent



- Add about 1 handful of detergent to one gallon of hot water.
- The solution should feel slimy to the touch.
- Wipe down window wells/sills using the paper towels or sponges dipped in the solution.
- Damp mop your wood floors 2-4 times a week.
- Change your rinse water for each new surface you clean.

Source: *Safer Cleaning: An A to Z Resource Guide of Safe Alternatives to Household Cleaning & Maintenance Supplies*, <http://www.epa.gov/region07/citizens/safercleaning.pdf>

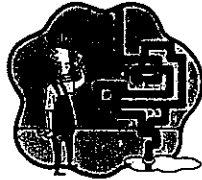
Keeping a Healthy Home Seven Tips Made Easy



Adapted from: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, Seven Tips for Keeping a Healthy Home

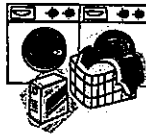
1. Keep It Dry: Keep Moisture down

- Wipe down shower after each use
- Bathroom has no exhaust fan:
 - Keep door open while showering
 - Keep a fan in front of the door – face out
- Bath sponges are breeding grounds for mold and bacteria--use a wash cloth instead and wash it frequently with the laundry.
- Check and fix plumbing leaks before mold grows.
- Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in roof or rain water due to poor drainage.




2. Keep it Clean

- Clean up clutter
- Damp mop, damp dust, and vacuum often.
- Vacuum -- carpeting is a major hiding place for dust mites.
 - Use vacuums with Hepa Filter/Bagless
 - Go over the room 3 to 4 times
- Wash bedding once a week using hot water to kill dust mites.
- Leave your shoes at the door so you don't bring more pollutants inside.
- Dusting --Use microfiber cloth (damp) and duster.
- **Allergy/Asthma concerns require extra attention:**
 - Dust daily for 10 – 15 minutes --TV, ceiling fans, counters, bookshelves, etc.
 - Involve individuals without allergy/asthma issues to help.
 - Use mattress and pillow covers.
 - Remove carpets, drapes, books, stuffed animals, and feather or down pillows and covers from the bedroom.
 - Household cleaners, bug spray and other pesticides, pet treatments, and air fresheners can irritate kids' lungs, especially if your kids have asthma. Investigate less toxic alternatives.



3. Keep it Safe

- Poisonous products: Store where children can't reach them, preferably up high and in a locked cabinet

- Reduce the amount of toxic chemicals and antibacterial products used and stored in and around the home.
- Use separate Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms --
 - Install near bedroom and garage 
 - Put at eye level
 - Test regularly/replace batteries as needed
- Inspect your gas appliances and chimney every year. Replace furnace filters every month or two during periods of use. Make sure your gas dryer, furnace and water heaters are vented to the outdoors.
- Never use a charcoal grill or generator indoors or in a closed area like a garage.

4. Keep it Well-Ventilated

- Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens
- Open windows
- Use whole house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants.
- Change air filters regularly

5. Keep it Pest-free

- Wipe down counters
- Store food in covered containers
- Do not use pesticide sprays. Get rid of cockroaches by carefully cleaning (especially in the kitchen) and removing trash every day. Use pesticides as a last resort.
- Choose least toxic pesticides, such as sticky traps and closed container baits.



6. Keep it Contaminant-free

- Adopt a smoke free policy in your home
- Lead Free – have your old home checked
- Test for radon
- Read labels. Some chemicals should only be used in well-ventilated spaces. The label may tell you if the chemicals can cause cancer or other health problems.



7. Keep it Well-Maintained

- Inspect your home routinely
- Repair minor problems before they become large repairs or problems.

Sources: <http://hud.gov/healthyhomes>, <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/hometips/dhp/Air.htm>;
<http://www.ewg.org/parentsgreenguide>; <http://tips.simplygoodstuff.com/take-control-of-your-home-environment/>