

Safer Alternatives to Hazardous Household Products

Substance	Active Ingredients/Effects	Safer Alternative
Glass Cleaner	Ammonia: irritant – can cause chemical burns, affects mucous membranes	Vinegar and water
Drain Cleaner	Lye – very caustic, can cause chemical burns	Metal snake, or ¼ cup baking soda, followed by ½ cup vinegar, flush with boiling water when fizzing stops
Toilet Cleaner	Chlorine and hydrochloric acid: irritant, causes burns, toxic	2-3 teaspoons borax and liquid dish soap in 2 quarts warm water
Furniture Polish	Petroleum distillates, nitrobenzene – flammable, toxic	One part lemon juice to two parts olive or vegetable oil
Mothballs	P-dichlorobenzene, a known carcinogen	Cedar blocks or chips, store clean woolens in airtight container or bag
Silver Polish	Sulfuric acid, acidified thiourea – causes burns, toxic	Soak in boiling water with 1 tsp. baking soda, 1 tsp. salt with a piece of aluminum foil
Insecticides	Various chemicals, some quite toxic	Roaches – boric acid powder or baking soda and powdered sugar. Ants – red chili powder or cream of tartar across entry path. Garden – mild insecticidal soaps, organic controls
Batteries	Corrosive, toxic, contain heavy metals	Use rechargeable batteries when feasible
Paint Solvents and Thinners	Flammable and toxic	Use latex paints, if cleaning brushes, let paint settle to bottom of closed jar, pour off clear solvent and reuse

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