

Vibrant Wellness Journal



Natural Cleaning & Healthy Body Care

Presented by Andrea Bertoli, Chef & Educator
Vibrant Wellness Education
VibrantWellnessJournal.com



Why Choose Natural Cleaners?

In our daily lives we are exposed to dozens, if not hundreds, of chemicals. Cleaning products, off-gassing materials, petrochemicals, agricultural chemicals and household cleaners fill our days with danger. These various chemicals build up in our bodies over time. Learning to spot harmful chemical ingredients and reduce the use of them in the home can lead to cleaner air, less skin/hair irritation and less risk of disease. Generally, these chemicals pose a cumulative danger to adults, but pose a greater danger to infants, children and pets while in the home. Over 2,000 chemicals are introduced each year and MOST do not undergo toxicity tests.

From the [Non-Toxic Avenger](#) by Deanna Duke: "Most chemical substances have been shown to be anywhere from 3 to 10 times more toxic to fetuses and newborns than to adults. And by the time you are six months old, you have already received 30% of your lifetime toxic load of chemicals."

Chemicals, if they are studied at all, are studied in isolation, but there is mounting evidence that the buildup of these chemicals is dangerous to our bodies and minds, this is known as a cumulative body burden. Studies link exposure to chemicals in our daily lives with various reproductive disorders, neurological problems, cancer, autism and other issues. But the good news is that it's easy to avoid these chemicals just by learning how to make a few easy changes in your life!

Why Choose Natural Body Care?

In addition to the chemicals we face in our daily life without knowing, we add to it by covering our bodies with dozens more chemicals each day: shampoo, makeup, deodorant, shaving cream, perfumes and all the other products we use each day to keep us clean and smelling good potentially contain chemicals, fragrance, preservatives and more. And all of these chemicals are being absorbed directly into our most sensitive organ everyday!

Just as with other chemicals or cleaners, few of the thousand body care ingredients are actually tested for safety, interactions and cumulative effects. Couple that with weak labeling rules, and companies can include a range of ingredients that are linked to cancer, Alzheimer's and skin irritation.

One such class of chemicals found in high concentrations in body care products are endocrine disruptors such as parabens. Found in mouthwash, shampoo, shower gels, face wash, lotions and more, these bind to hormone receptor sites in our body, causing hormonal confusion and leading to adverse developmental, reproductive, neurological, and immune effects.

Natural Cleaning Recipes

Here are some simple recipes to ditch the chemicals and make your own cleaners from everyday (affordable) products:

- Glass cleaner: White vinegar can be used in a spray bottle, but even better in combination with a few other simple ingredients. Mix together ¼ cup rubbing alcohol, ¼ cup white vinegar, 1 Tablespoon organic cornstarch and 2 cups warm water. Shake to combine, and then shake each time before use. Use on mirrors and glass.
- Baking soda for scrubbing and cleaning pans: If you've ever burnt your pans to a crisp on the stove, simply cover the bottom with white vinegar. Bring to a boil, then add baking soda. Drain, and scrub as usual. Easy! Here are some more tips for how to use [baking soda for natural cleaning](http://bit.ly/TpavxM): <http://bit.ly/TpavxM>.
- Natural Drain Cleaner: For slow moving or slightly clogged drains (sinks or tubs), dump about ½ cup baking soda into the drain. Add an equal amount of vinegar and let the foamy magic happen. Let stand for 15 minutes then rinse with warm or hot water to flush the drain. If it's still clogged, use a small plunger to release clogs, then repeat with vinegar and baking soda.
- Floor cleaner: Basic cleaner: mix together equal parts white vinegar and warm water. Mop as usual. For disinfecting, use 1 gallon of hot water mixed with ¼ cup Borax (find at hardware stores). Don't use vinegar on wood floors, as it can dull the finish. More [healthy floor cleaning tips here](http://bit.ly/1hnpNhw): <http://bit.ly/1hnpNhw>
- All-purpose Cleaner: Here's two recipes! In a reused spray bottle, mix together ½ cup water, ½ cup apple cider vinegar or white vinegar and 20 drops essential oil (optional, but lovely). Shake and use! Or try this one: 1 cup water, 2 teaspoons castile soap (like Dr. Bronner's), 20 drops essential oils. Shake well before use.
- Essential oils are potent extracts from plants, spices and herbs. They add a lovely scent to your homemade products, but also aid in cleaning. Thyme, oregano, rosemary and tea tree are anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and can help keep your kitchen and bathroom super clean and fresh smelling. Think of pine or juniper for floor cleaners, or lavender, lemon or rose for all-purpose cleaners. Have fun mixing and experimenting with your own signature scents.
- Don't forget the elbow grease: Using a little bit of muscle can go a long way to creating a cleaner home; sure the chemicals might make it easier, but is it worth the trade-off?



Recommended Natural Brands



If you are not feeling ambitious enough to make your own natural cleaners, there are lots of credible, sustainable and healthy brands available. Here are some of my favorites:

- Method: Making a range of earth-friendly cleaners with fun and unique scents. Easily found at health food stores but also Target, Safeway and others. Handsoap, dishsoap, bathroom cleaners, floor cleaners and more.
- Dr. Bronner's Magic Soap: A super natural and super powerful plant-based soap in a variety of scents. Organic, fair-trade and sustainably made, Dr. Bronner's can be used everywhere in the house: for handsoap, body wash, shampoo, laundry, cleaning dishes, cleaning the toilet, bathtub and more. Find at health food stores and Long's Drugs.
- Seventh Generation: Another popular and totally sustainable brand, including cleaners, soaps, sprays and even paper products like paper towels, toilet paper and diapers and baby wipes. Find at health food stores.
- Mrs. Meyers: Strongly but pleasantly scented to give your house a theme scent: bathroom, all-purpose, dish soap and more. Find at health food stores and at various grocery stores.
- Costco: Even Costco makes their own brand of earth-friendly dish soap and laundry soap.
- Ecover: Another line of good-ingredient products; not my personal favorite but well-loved by many friends.

Bring on the Natural Body Care!

- Learn to read the labels: most brands of lotion, shampoo and skin care products have a host of potentially hazardous ingredients, most of which have NOT been tested. Here are just some examples (Find the full table of products, ingredients and potential dangers: <http://bit.ly/1h715UW>):

SOAP	TRICLOSAN TRICLOCARBAN	PROBABLE CARCINOGEN THYROID AND ENDOCRINE DISRUPTION
DEODORANT & ANTIPERSPIRANT	ALUMINUM _____	ALZHEIMER'S
LIP BALM	RETINYL PALMITATE	FACILITATES CANCER CELL GROWTH WHEN EXPOSED TO SUN
SOAPS & SHAMPOOS	SODIUM LAURYL SULFATE	OPENS PORES TO ALLOW GREATER ABSORPTION OF OTHER CHEMICALS

- Ditch the anti-bacterial soaps: Most importantly: they don't work any better than regular soap. They are also potentially carcinogenic and leak into the environment.
- Avoid fragrance: As many companies use 'proprietary' fragrances, they are not required to disclose the actual ingredients; fragrance can be derived from wood, animals, food or chemicals.
- Choose sunscreen wisely: Avoid chemical sunscreens which include oxybenzone and choose physical blockers instead: look for zinc oxide. It will make your face pasty white, but will keep the cancer away. Recommended brands: Alba, Hara, Badger, MyChelle, Raw Elements.
- Learn to make your own products! There are lots of recipes online for making your own scrubs, toothpaste, lotions, body butter and so much more! See the links section on the next page to find some new favorite products, including the recipe for our Homemade Sugar Body Scrub!
- Don't forget about makeup! These ingredients are not tested either— in fact, the board that oversees cosmetic safety is made up of cosmetic manufacturers! Look for natural versions of foundation, eye makeup, nail polish and lipstick especially, which often contains lead.
- Choose Simple: Sometimes the simplest products are the best for our bodies. I regularly use coconut oil on my skin (yes, even my face!). Olive oil, almond oil and jojoba oils are actually quite good for our skin as they absorb readily and offer nourishment to our cells. Other options are shea butter, cocoa butter (choose a natural one) and aloe vera. These can be used on face, body, in hair (use sparingly and with caution to avoid oily locks) and even for personal lubricant.
- Learn to go without: Take a peek at all the products that you use on a daily basis— what could be cut out? Do you really need a separate face and body lotion? What about shave gel, eye make up remover, and foot creme? Reducing the amount of products in the house reduces your potential exposure to chemicals and reduces waste (not to mention saving time AND money!)

Recommended Products & Brands

- Dr. Bronners: As mentioned above, great for skin, hair, laundry and general household cleaning.
- Acure: A beautiful package and ingredient list: shampoos, conditioner, lotions, skin products.
- Kiss My Face: Quality brand with not-so-expensive lotion and shaving lotions.
- Nature's Gate: Shampoos and conditioners with great ingredients.
- EO: A natural brand of lotions, shampoos, and cleansers with exotic scents.
- Pangea: Hard to find in Hawaii, but very eco-centric and clean products.
- Indigenous Soap: Locally-made vegetable based soaps.
- Puna Noni: A Hawaii-brand focused on healthy ingredients with a dose of healing noni fruit.
- Avalon Organics: Great lavender scented lotions, shower gels and shampoo
- Weleda: A biodynamic product line with skin care, baby items and more, grown on their herb farm.



Links for Further Reading

Links for Natural Recipes:

Homemade Sugar Scrub: <http://bit.ly/1mkzauw>
Homemade Lip Balm: <http://bit.ly/1pMwDzI>
Whipped Body Butter: <http://bit.ly/11bEH9W>
Natural Cleaning Recipes: <http://bit.ly/1okUJPy>
Homemade Lotions: <http://bit.ly/1k0NG9l>
Homemade Toothpaste: <http://bit.ly/1aF8Ypu>
Baking Soda for Beauty: <http://bit.ly/1j748Fk>

Links for More Information:

The Story of Cosmetics: <http://bit.ly/1usY01o>
Healthy Home Resources from Pono Home:
<http://bit.ly/1kIc6Jk>
Ingredients to Avoid: <http://bit.ly/1kGq9zt>
Toxics to Avoid: <http://bit.ly/1h715UW>
Healthy Sunscreen Options: <http://bit.ly/1kQtN4X>
Environmental Working Group: <http://www.ewg.org/>
Campaign for Safe Cosmetics: <http://bit.ly/1fz5B-ne>
Tips to Choose Cleaning Products: <http://bit.ly/Tn8hPF>