

Alternative Cleaners

Less Toxic Solutions

Below is a list of less toxic alternative products. By using these homemade substitutes you will save money and make your home a safer place to live.

Drain Cleaner

Clean clogged pipes with a snake or plunger. Sprinkle baking soda down drain, followed by white vinegar.

Wait 15 minutes, flush with boiling water, then use plunger. Repeat if necessary until unclogged.

Rug and Upholstery Cleaner

Clean immediately with soda water and baking soda paste, then vacuum.

Spot Remover

Immediately soak in cold water, lemon juice, or club soda.

Tub and Tile Cleaner

Fill plastic flip-top shaker bottle half full with baking soda and add 15 drops of pure essential lemon oil. Stir then fill rest of bottle with baking soda. Close lid and shake. Sprinkle onto surfaces and wipe with damp sponge. Rinse well.

Cleaning Spray

Fill 16 oz. spray bottle with equal amounts of white distilled vinegar and water. Add 20 drops of pure peppermint (or other) oil and shake to mix. Spray directly onto surfaces and wipe clean.

Glass Cleaner

Use 2 tablespoons vinegar in 1 quart water and wipe glass with newspaper.

Furniture Polish

Put 2 teaspoons olive oil into a 16 oz. spray bottle. Add 20 drops lemon oil, 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar, fill with purified water and shake well. Spray on rag and wipe furniture clean.

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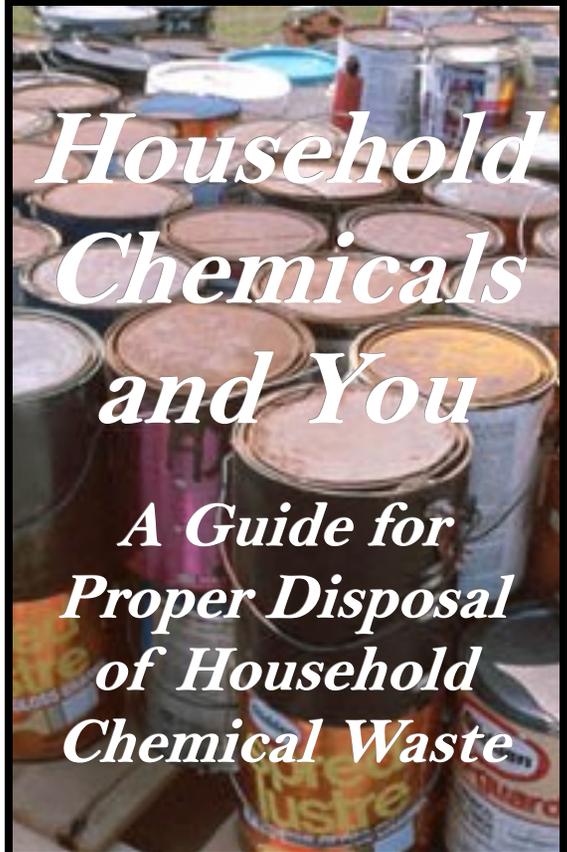
"To conserve, protect, and enhance the resources of Geauga County by providing leadership, education, and assistance to all."

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**Geauga Soil and Water
Conservation District**



Household Chemicals and You

A Guide for Proper Disposal of Household Chemical Waste

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Home Sweet Home

Hopefully most of us would never describe our homes as “hazardous,” but many of the products we use every day are actually toxic. Cleaners, paints, automotive fluids, batteries, and pesticides are just a few examples of products containing hazardous or toxic chemicals. Reading the product labels in just one room of your home (like your kitchen or bathroom) can prove to be enlightening yet frightening. Believe it or not, the average U.S. household accumulates as much as 100 pounds of hazardous waste over time. So without realizing it, our ordinary home can become extraordinarily toxic.

A product is considered a hazardous waste if it *contains ingredients that are potentially harmful to human health and the environment.*

Reading product labels is the first step to gaining a deeper understanding of their hazards. Labels tell us:

- The product ingredients
- The potential hazard of the product - TOXIC, IGNITABLE, CORROSIVE, and REACTIVE
- Warnings and signal words to identify the product’s toxicity level
 1. **CAUTION** – mild hazard
 2. **WARNING** – moderate hazard
 3. **DANGER or POISON** - extremely flammable, corrosive, or highly toxic
- Important directions regarding use, storage, and disposal of the product.

Each year Americans generate 1.6 million tons of household hazardous waste (HHW) and thousands of children die from chemicals improperly stored and used in the home.

Disposal Dangers

Not all water pollution comes from big factories. It is also caused by little household chores. And each little household adds up to one big hazardous waste problem. Like it or not, everything *does* go somewhere, even our toxic products. In fact, cleaning substances are the most common cause of home poisonings.



The average household contains 63 different hazardous chemicals

Basements, garages, kitchens, and closets across the County are home to a wide variety of potentially harmful materials whose improper disposal can have devastating, long-lasting consequences. By pouring these chemicals down the drain, into a storm sewer, on the ground, or even in the trash, we pollute the environment and endanger our health.

Tossing our HHW in the trash is by far the most common and damaging disposal method, causing soil and groundwater contamination, chemical reactions, and exposures. HHW poured on the ground or down a storm sewer will infiltrate through the soil and end up in the nearest waterway, poisoning aquatic habitat and wildlife. Ultimately, the health of our families and communities requires the understanding and responsible use of chemicals and products.



Americans who change their own oil throw away an estimated 120 million gallons of reusable oil every year.

What We Can Do

- The first step in dealing with hazardous products is knowing what you already have. **Take an inventory** of your house, room by room, and read the labels. **Consider safe storage strategies** such as keeping products away from heat sources, out of reach of children and pets, and only in original containers.
- When using hazardous products, **carefully follow instructions.**
- If you find a hazardous product that you no longer want, either **use it up or give it away.** Give that half-used gallon of paint to a neighbor or donate it to a group like a high school drama department or Habitat for Humanity.
- Still no luck? **Contact your county’s Solid Waste Management District for disposal and recycling options.** Collection days and household hazardous waste recycling facilities keep toxics out of landfills and drinking water supplies.
- **Consider making your own alternative cleaners.** Look back at some of your Grandma’s products (Borax and Bon Ami) or cleaning recipes made from biodegradable and nontoxic ingredients like baking soda, lemon juice, white distilled vinegar, salt, and liquid soap. They make inexpensive yet effective cleaners!
- When you absolutely need to buy a hazardous product for a specific job... **prevent leftovers!** While leftover pizza is great, avoid having leftover hazardous products by buying only what you need. Read labels, look for product certifications, and consider buying less toxic alternatives.

