

Household Chemicals and Toxic Waste

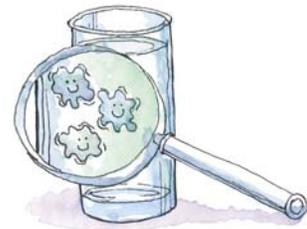
Many products found in households may pose a threat to your family's health. These products can also contaminate the LAC water supply if improperly handled.



Harmful products can include drain cleaners, oven cleaners, art supplies, lead-based paint, paint remover, solvents, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, pesticides, and de-icing salt. Ingredients such as lye, petroleum distillates, phenols and trichlorobenzene indicate that the products pose a threat to your health and the environment.

The following is a list of less toxic alternatives for household products:

- ◆ **Glass cleaners** - Use 2 tablespoons of vinegar in 1 quart of water.
- ◆ **Chlorine bleach** - Use oxygen bleaches or borax.
- ◆ **Toilet bowl cleaners** - Use baking soda and vinegar or a non-chlorinated scouring powder.
- ◆ **Ant control products** - Pour a line of cream of tartar, red chili powder, paprika, or dried peppermint leaves at point of entry.
- ◆ **Flea control products** - Give pets nutritional yeast, garlic tablets, or vitamin B as preventatives; prepare herbal baths with fennel, rue or rosemary to repel fleas.
- ◆ **Deodorizers** - Use an open box of baking soda in refrigerator or closets; for rooms, simmer cinnamon and cloves in water or place potpourri (herbs or dried flowers treated with scented oils) in open dishes.
- ◆ **Furniture/wood polish** - Rub furniture with 1 tablespoon of lemon oil mixed in one pint of mineral oil.
- ◆ **Drain cleaner** - Use a plunger, then add 1/4 cup baking soda followed by 1/2 cup vinegar; let sit for 15 minutes then rinse with 2 quarts of boiling water.
- ◆ **Carpet spot cleaner** - Apply club soda immediately, blot dry, then repeat. Or sprinkle with cornmeal and cornstarch and vacuum after 30 minutes.



When you do use toxic substances

- ◆ Unused paint can be disposed of at your local transfer station by mixing it with sawdust or kitty litter in the original container until solidified.

- ◆ Reduce the amount of chemicals and toxic products you use and store in your home or garage. Use and dispose of products carefully and according to label directions.
- ◆ Never pour chemicals down the drain or on the ground.
- ◆ Store chemicals in a safe place. Check containers regularly for leakage. Follow storage and disposal instructions placed on the container by the manufacturer.
- ◆ If storing chemicals and/or toxic waste in anything other than the original container, be sure to label it with the name of the new substance.
- ◆ If you have any question regarding proper storage and/or handling, contact the manufacturer. Contact information is typically printed on the container.
- ◆ Consult town transfer station officials for disposal options. Work with your town to support household hazardous waste collection days.

If you have a leak or spill, clean it up right away, notify the Maine Department of Environmental Protection at 800.452.4664 and the LAC at 247.5239. We're here to help you help us provide sparkling clean, safe drinking water.