



Asthma-Friendly Homes

Make sure to keep all homemade formulas well-labeled, and out of the reach of children.

All-Purpose Cleaner:

Mix 1/2 cup vinegar and 1/4 cup baking soda (or 2 teaspoons borax) into 1/2 gallon (2 liters) water. Store and keep. Use for removal of water deposit stains on shower stall panels, bathroom chrome fixtures, windows, bathroom mirrors, etc.

Air Freshener:

- Baking soda or vinegar with lemon juice in small dishes absorbs odors around the house.
- Grind up a slice of lemon in the garbage disposal.
- Simmer water and cinnamon or other spices on the stove.
- Carpets - Sprinkle baking soda on carpets several hours before vacuuming.

Disinfectant:

Mix 2 teaspoons borax, 4 tablespoons vinegar and 3 cups hot water. For stronger cleaning power add 1/4 teaspoon liquid castile soap. Wipe on with dampened cloth or use non-aerosol spray bottle. To disinfect kitchen sponges, put them in the dishwasher when running a load.

Furniture Polish:

For varnished wood: add a few drops of lemon oil into a 1/2 cup warm water. Mix well and spray onto a soft cotton cloth. Cloth should only be slightly damp. Wipe furniture with the cloth, and finish by wiping once more using a dry soft cotton cloth. For unvarnished wood: mix two tps each of olive oil and lemon juice and apply a small amount to a soft cotton cloth. Wring the cloth to spread the mixture further into the material and apply to the furniture using wide strokes. This helps distribute the oil evenly.

Another alternative is microfiber cloths which lift off dirt, grease and dust without the need for cleaning chemicals because they are formulated to penetrate and trap dirt. There are a number of different brands. A good quality cloth can last for several years.

Mold and Mildew:

Use white vinegar or lemon juice full strength. Apply with a sponge or scrubby.

Mothballs:

Cedar chips in a cheesecloth square, or cedar oil in an absorbant cloth will repel moths. The cedar should be 'aromatic cedar', also referred to as juniper in some areas. Cedar chips are available at many craft supply stores, or make your own using a plane and a block of cedar from the lumberyard. Homemade moth-repelling sachets can also be made with lavender, rosemary, vetiver and rose petals. Dried lemon peels are also a natural moth deterrent - simply toss into clothes chest, or tie in cheesecloth and hang in the closet.

Scouring Powder:

For top of stove, refrigerator and other such surfaces that should not be scratched, use baking soda. Apply baking soda directly with a damp sponge.

Tub and Tile Cleaner:

For simple cleaning, rub in baking soda with a damp sponge and rinse with fresh water. For tougher jobs, wipe surfaces with vinegar first and follow with baking soda as a scouring powder. (Vinegar can break down tile grout, so use sparingly.)

Window Cleaner:

Mix 2 teaspoons white vinegar with 1 liter (qt) warm water. Use crumpled newspaper or cotton cloth to clean. Don't clean windows if the sun is on them or if they are warm because streaks will show on drying. The All-Purpose Cleaner also works well on windows. Be sure to follow the recipe because using too strong a solution of vinegar will etch the glass and eventually cloud it

Note: These formulas and substitutions are offered to help minimize the use of harsh substances in your home. Results may vary and cannot be guaranteed to be 100% safe and effective. Before applying any cleaning formulations, test in small hidden areas if possible. Always use caution with any new product in your home. Adapted from http://www.eartheasy.com/live_nontoxic_solutions.htm

