

A Cleaner Way to Wash Up — 11 Avoidable Ingredients in Dish Detergent

As many folks have a growing concern about the effect chemicals have on themselves and their families, the list of ingredients on the countless labeled household products has captured our attention. Of course, there is also concern for how these chemicals effect the environment. And according to the EPA, our greatest exposure to toxic chemicals is right in our own homes. Since the FDA doesn't mandate ingredient disclosure and each person has their own allergies and sensitivities, what may be deemed "safe" for one person may be harmful to another. And this is especially true for children as liquid dish soap is one of the leading causes of poisonings in children under six!

So, here's what you DON'T want listed in your dish detergent:

- 1. Phosphates:** Phosphates are water-softening mineral additives that also function as a fertilizer in water. They are also especially dangerous in our water supply and for marine life, causing oxygen levels in the water to decline and potentially killing fish. High concentrations of phosphates in the water can lead to harmful algae growth which effects the taste and smell of our drinking water and can be toxic to marine life. Even though new regulations which took effect in 2010 limited the phosphorus concentration in household cleaning products to 0.5 per cent, why not just opt for phosphate-free brands?
- 2. Triclosan:** A synthetic antimicrobial agent with antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral properties often added to dish detergent to be touted as "antibacterial." Dangerous for our hormone system as it disrupts both the thyroid and the endocrine system and bioaccumulates in the body. And further, similar to overusing antibiotics--it is believed that antibacterial products may accelerate the growth of superbugs and weaken our immune system.
- 3. 1,4 Dioxane:** A byproduct of the process ethoxylation (increases water solubility), 1,4 dioxane can also be listed as PEG and is classified by the EPA as a probable carcinogen to humans. Readily absorbed through the skin.
- 4. SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate)/SLES (sodium laureth sulfate):** Surfactants used in dish detergents for foam building. They are commonly used because they're inexpensive and effective at cutting through grease. Easily absorbed through the skin with the strongest concern being the potential contamination with 1,4 dioxane. Can cause skin rashes, eye irritations and allergic reactions.
- 5. Fragrance:** More than 3000 chemicals are used when making fragrance mixtures. These toxic fragrance compounds coat plates, glasses and silverware which ultimately become ingested when used. A safer alternative is to choose products scented with pure essential oils, not those with artificial chemicals.
- 6. DEA (diethanolamine), MEA (monoethanolamine), TEA (triethanolamine):** These are hormone disrupting chemicals known to form nitrates and nitrosamines. These ethoxylated alcohols may also be contaminated with 1,4-dioxane, a possible human carcinogen that is persistent in the environment. DEA is a mild skin and severe eye irritant. MEA is known to induce asthma in workplace settings.

7. Coal Tar Dyes: Derived from petrochemicals, and may be contaminated with trace amount of



heavy metals like arsenic, cadmium and lead. Dyes in cleaning products can be absorbed through the skin or ingested in the case of soap residue on dishes.

Um, last time I glanced at the dishwashing detergents in the cleaning supplies aisle of a grocery store, the bottles were a rainbow of blue, green, yellow, orange and purple! Really? That bright color isn't making your dishes any cleaner, just introducing them to more chemicals and adverse health effects. Also listed as colors "CI," "FD&C," or "D&C."

8. APE's (alkyl phenoxy ethanols): Researchers found that in small amounts, these chemicals activate estrogen receptors in cells, including stimulating the growth of breast cancer cells when tested on animals.

9. Chlorine: Sodium dichloroisocyanurate, often found in conventional automatic dishwasher products also releases chlorine fumes into the air during use. It is listed on the EPA's Community Right-To-Know list and also listed in the 1990 Clean Air Act as a hazardous air pollutant. Extremely toxic to fish.

10. Formaldehyde: Recently added to the known carcinogens list (finally!), formaldehyde is most commonly used as a water solution called formalin, rather than its pure form. With the help of preservatives, formaldehyde is released in small amounts over time to protect against bacteria contamination. Also referred to as Quaternium-15 or DMDM hydantoin. Other trade names for formaldehyde are methanol, methyl aldehyde and methylene oxide.

11. Ammonia: Ammonia is a very volatile chemical and can be damaging to your eyes, respiratory tract and skin. A dangerous combination is mixing bleach and ammonia as the fumes can be very toxic, and often people don't even know that their dish detergents contain these chemicals.

While it's true that these chemicals are present in small amounts, it's the repeated everyday use that can have a negative cumulative effect on our health. And let's face it, washing dishes is a daily act. At MightyNest, we recommend using [dish detergents](#) and [cleaning supplies](#) that are made with safe, plant-derived materials and without any harmful chemicals.

This is a very good website that recommends Good Products!

<http://mightynest.com/blog/a-cleaner-way-to-wash-up-%E2%80%94-11-avoidable-ingredients-in-dish-detergent>