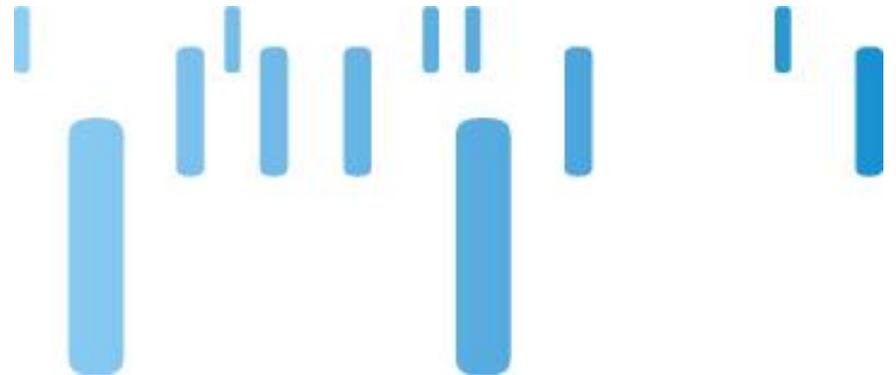


Hidden Hazards of Household Chemicals



Hidden Hazards

Did you know that you come in contact with hazardous chemicals everyday?

- We are not just talking about the workplace either

Every one of us has a hazardous chemical in our home and if there is not a conscious effort to handle them safely, your health may be in jeopardy

With the changing seasons many of us will practice “Spring Cleaning” soon – make sure you follow these safety measures



What are Examples of Household Chemicals?

Typical household chemicals include:

- Detergents
- Cleaners
- Nail polish removers/sticker removers/leather and textile sprays
- Polishers/waxes/floor treatment products
- Turpentine/petrol
- Insect or rodent repellents



Understand the Risks of Household Chemicals

- Human exposure – the most likely routes are:
 - Skin (dermal) contact
 - Eye contact
 - Inhalation of vapors
 - Ingestion (oral) is not likely – except for babies and small children
- Flammability – some products can easily set fire
- Environment – indoor air quality, spills
- Read the safety instructions before use and ask yourself:



What could go wrong?

Which precautions should I take?

How can I use the product safely?

Globally Harmonized System of Labeling

Chemicals are labelled in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Globally Harmonized System (GHS)

Pictogram	What does it mean?	What to do?
	Highly or extremely flammable gas, aerosol, liquid and vapor	Do not heat, or spray on an open flame. Keep container tightly closed
	May cause allergic skin reaction or serious eye irritation; harm if swallowed or inhaled; harm to the environment	Avoid skin and eye contact. Avoid release to the environment
	May corrode metals, cause severe skin burns and eye damage	Wear protective gloves, clothes, eye and face protection
	May damage fertility or the unborn child, cause cancer, allergies or asthma symptoms, damage organs	Avoid breathing dust or fumes. Call poison center or doctor if respiratory symptoms
	Poisonous, can harm or kill if swallowed, inhaled or in contact with skin	Handle with care. Do not eat or drink when using it. Use protective equipment. Avoid skin and eye contact
	Toxic to the aquatic life	Avoid release to the environment. Collect spillage

Classification of Chemicals and Examples

Product							What precautions to take?
Detergents, all-purpose cleaners		✓					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wear gloves and wash hands afterwards
Drain cleaners, oven and BBQ cleaners, scale removers, bleach, ammonia, bases, acids		✓	✓			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wear gloves and wash hands afterwards wear safety goggles ensure ventilation or use outdoors
Nail polish remover, sticker remover, leather and textile sprays	✓	✓				✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep away from fire and sparks ensure ventilation or use outdoors
Turpentine, petrol, waxes, floor polishers	✓			✓		✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wear gloves and wash hands afterwards keep away from fire and sparks ensure ventilation or use outdoors
Insect and rodent repellants					✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wear gloves and wash hands afterwards wear safety goggles

Summary when Using Household Chemicals

- Read and follow the safety instructions on the label
- Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): follow all cautions and warnings provided by manufacturer labels
- Wash hands after use and change clothes if any splash or spills occur
- Make sure there is adequate ventilation or use the product outdoors
- Do not use near open flames or fire
- Do not eat or drink when using household chemicals
- Do not mix household chemicals!



Storage of Household Chemicals

- Take a tour of your house to see what household chemicals you have and where they are located
- Keep out of reach of children
- Keep in original container and do not remove label
- Do not store in food containers and store away from food and beverages
- Store in a cool/dry place away from heat/fire



What to do if Exposed?

- If exposed to skin, eyes or inhalation of vapors:
 - Skin: thoroughly wash effected area with mild soap and water
 - Eyes: thoroughly flush the eyes with large amounts of clean low-pressure water for at least 15 minutes, occasionally lifting the upper and lower eyelids
 - Inhalation: if symptoms are experienced, move to fresh air
- If symptoms persist, seek medical attention
- If swallowed or ingested:
 - Obtain emergency medical attention immediately

Spillage and Disposal

- Do not flush waste products through toilets, sinks or drains

- Clean up spills immediately:
 - Use rags/paper to clean up
 - Wear gloves, safety goggles and masks
 - Allow fumes in the rags/paper to evaporate outdoors
 - Dispose of rags/paper by wrapping in a newspaper and place in a plastic bag in your outdoor litter bin

- Dispose of waste products and empty containers correctly:
 - Check with your local waste collection agency



References

- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe:
<https://www.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/pictograms.html>
- European Chemicals Agency (ECHA):
<https://echa.europa.eu/regulations/clp>
- United States Department of Labor:
<https://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/>
- American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
- Department of Homeland Security: www.ready.gov