

In 1989 a House subcommittee asked the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to analyze 2,983 chemicals used in personal care products. The results were as follows: 884 of the ingredients were found to be toxic. Of these, 778 can cause acute toxicity, 146 can cause tumors, 218 can cause reproductive complications, 314 can cause biological mutation, and 376 can cause skin and eye irritations.⁸

Why must we expose our precious children to these poisons when there are safer alternatives available?

INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Are you concerned about the air your child breathes? You may be shocked to learn that according to an EPA Report to Congress on Indoor Air and the subcommittee hearings on the Indoor Air Quality Act of 1989, indoor air pollution is one of the nation's most important environmental health problems. According to the EPA, most homes have airborne concentrations of hazardous and toxic chemicals that are two to five times higher indoors than outdoors. In one five-year study the EPA reported that a number of homes had chemical levels that were seventy times higher inside the homes than outside!⁹

One reason chemical concentrations are so high in some homes is that cleaning products and some personal care products release toxic vapors into the air when they are used — and even when they are stored. This process is called outgassing.

It's alarming that indoor air is so full of chemical vapors because most children spend twelve to twenty hours a day in their homes. Physiologically children are more vulnerable to toxic vapors than adults because of their higher metabolic rate. They require more oxygen, and they breathe in two to three times as much air (and therefore toxins) relative to body size than adults. Children are more physically active. This also increases their breathing rate and intake of toxins. In addition children play close to the floor where heavier pollutants settle.¹⁰

Airborne chemicals are a suspected cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) which takes the lives of thousands of infants each year. This may explain the documented higher incidence of SIDS in the wintertime.

"Indoor air pollution is one of the most important environmental health problems."

*Environmental Protection Agency
In a report to Congress*

During the winter windows are left closed, decreasing ventilation, which increases the concentration of outgassed vapors in the home.¹¹ No one knows what causes SIDS, but why take unnecessary chances with your infant?

Fortunately, parents can do something to reduce their family's exposure to airborne toxins from household products. They can simply switch brands.

TO CONCERNED PARENTS

I think it's important to say that household cleaning and personal care products are not the only source of chemicals in your home. As you have seen, however, they are some of the most toxic and deadly. Fortunately they are also the easiest to replace.

This brochure is not only meant to inform, but it is also a call to action. Knowing now that the chemicals in your home can seriously harm, even kill, your child, wouldn't it be better to get them out of your home? Since there are safer, effective alternatives, is there any reason to place your child at risk another day? Don't wait! To make your home a healthier and safer place, call the person whose name appears below. Call today!

Sources:

1. Shirley Camper Saman, *Let's Stop Destroying Our Children* (Fawcett Books, 1974).
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4. *Injury Facts* (National Safety Council, 2003).
5. *Exposure of Homemakers to Toxic Contaminants*. Toronto Indoor Air Commission, 1990.
6. Carolyn Rueben, "Warning: Your Home May Be Hazardous to Your Health," *East/West Magazine* 19, no. 7 (July 1989).
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8. Judith Berns, "The Cosmetic Cover-up," *Human Ecologist* 43 (Fall 1989).
9. Nancy Sokol Green, *Poisoning Our Children* (The Noble Press, 1991).
10. Joyce Schoenaker, Ph.D. & Charly Viale, Ph.D., *Healthy Homes, Healthy Kids* (Island Press, 1991).
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Let's Stop Our Poisoning

Children!

by Richard M. Barry



Why should three-year-old Jason Whitley have died a lingering and horrible death after swallowing three ounces of hair conditioner? Two weeks after drinking the liquid, which contains ammonia, the little boy died.

And why should seven-month-old Adrian Gonzales have died? He crawled through a puddle of spilled laundry bleach which gave him third-degree burns on 50 percent of his tiny body, and burned his lungs from the fumes as well. It took him four agonizing days to die. And why should little Peter Schwab have suffered so much? When he was a year old he crawled over to the dishwasher to watch his mother unloading it. Suddenly he put a finger into the detergent dispensing cup and ate a fingerful of wet but undissolved Electrasol. In minutes his face was red and blistered, and the inside of his mouth and his tongue were burned white. Because of a series of lucky circumstances, Peter was in a hospital within minutes and he recovered in a few days. Not so for the little girl across the hall in the hospital who (according to Peter's mother) ate some dishwasher detergent and required seven operations to reopen her scarred esophagus. Or the eighteen-month-old boy who had to eat and breathe through tubes for five months and at last count has had thirty operations. Dishwasher detergent is what destroyed his throat too.¹

Why must these children have suffered so? If only they had never been exposed to such hazardous chemicals. Every year five to ten million household poisonings are reported. Many are fatal and most of the victims are children.² These poisonings are the result of accidental ingestion of common household substances found in just about every home.

The real tragedy is, accidents like these can easily be avoided. But most parents aren't aware that there are effective products on the market that are much safer than nationally advertised brands and, in most cases, cost less.

This brochure is meant to be a wake-up call for parents. I think you will be shocked to learn about some of the health hazards your child is exposed to every day because of the cleaning and personal care products in your home. I pray you will read this information carefully. Your child's health and safety may depend on it.

"More children under four die of accidental poisonings at home than are accidentally killed with guns at home."
National Safety Council

HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS — A LOADED GUN

The average home today contains more chemicals than were found in a typical chemistry lab at the turn of the 20th century.³ The Consumer Product Safety Commission has determined that cleaning products are some of the most dangerous substances in the home. Go into your kitchen and bathroom and look under the sinks where you keep your cleaning and personal care supplies. What have you found? Window cleaner? Bleach? Laundry and dishwashing detergent? Shampoo?

"Of chemicals commonly found in homes, 150 have been linked to allergies, birth defects, cancer, and psychological abnormalities."
Consumer Product Safety Commission

Mouthwash? These products can be violent, lethal poisons with the potential to kill or seriously injure your child—or any child who may come into your home.

Would you keep a loaded gun under your sink? Of course not! What a silly question! Yet these products can be just as deadly.

Maybe you keep your cleaning and personal care products locked away or up high out of the reach of children. If you do, good! But I ask you again. Would you feel comfortable keeping a loaded gun there? Would you bet your child's life that he or she could never get to that gun? Of course not! Yet more children under four die of accidental poisonings at home than are accidentally killed with guns at home.⁴

My point is this — why are these lethal products in your home at all? Probably because you didn't realize how dangerous they can be. And you probably weren't aware that there are products on the market that are effective, much safer, and more economical than grocery store brands. The fact is, by using safer household products you would no longer be taking unnecessary chances with your child.

LONG-TERM HEALTH HAZARDS OF HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Most poisonings happen slowly, over a long period of time, by daily exposure to toxins in the air and toxic chemicals that come into contact with the skin. Household products are among the most toxic substances we encounter daily. In one study conducted over a fifteen-year period, women who worked at home had a 54% higher death rate from cancer than women who had jobs away from the home.

The study concluded that the increased death rate in the women was due to daily exposure to the hazardous chemicals found in ordinary household products.⁵ Also, a report by the Consumer Product Safety Commission on chemicals commonly found in homes identified 150 that have been linked to allergies, birth defects, cancer, and psychological abnormalities.⁶ And, a 1985 EPA report concluded that the toxic chemicals in household cleaners are three times more likely to cause cancer than air pollution.

Obviously, children are exposed to these same chemicals at home. After day-in, day-out exposure to these toxins, they may suddenly respond with cancer, learning difficulties, allergies, lung problems, or damage to the immune system.⁷

With your child's long-term health at stake, should these chemicals remain in your home?

TOXIC INGREDIENTS IN PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Personal care products are made to put on your skin, in your hair, or in your mouth. But many ingredients used in personal care products are also toxic and can be either ingested during use (like some ingredients in mouthwash and toothpaste), or can be easily absorbed through the skin into the bloodstream (like some ingredients in soaps, lotions, creams, cosmetics, shampoos, deodorants, etc.).

"After analyzing 2,983 chemicals used in personal care products, 884 were found to be toxic."
National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

