In every area of your home, you can find potentially dangerous products and substances. Taking care of your home requires the use of many products, which contain toxic, flammable or corrosive ingredients that can be hazardous if used, stored or disposed of incorrectly. It is important to know how to safely use and store these products and where to dispose of unused or old products that could endanger people and the environment. Special care should be taken when disposing of hazardous products. You can make your home safer and healthier by reducing exposure to hazards in your home.

**A Basement:** Paint, paint stripper, paint thinner, stain, turpentine, varnish and radon.

**B Bathroom:** Medications, aerosol sprays, corrosive chemicals, disinfectants, drain cleaner, tub and tile cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, window cleaner, and lead.

**C Bedroom:** Dry cleaning, mercury thermostat, tobacco smoke, mothballs and lead.

**D Kitchen:** Ammonia, air freshener, furniture polish, lighter fluid, metal polish, oven cleaner, batteries, light bulbs and lead.

**E Garage:** Pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, weed killer, fertilizer, automotive batteries, antifreeze, brake fluid, gasoline, diesel, motor oil, transmission fluid, starter fluid, carbon monoxide, and car polish and wax.

**F Laundry room:** Bleach, detergent, stain remover, fabric softeners and fluorescent light bulbs.

**G Living room:** Carbon monoxide, candles, incense, tobacco smoke and lead.
What actions can you take for a safer healthier home?

There are things you can do to protect yourself, your household and your community from unnecessary exposure to hazardous household products.

SELECT SAFER PRODUCTS

✓ Read the label to see if the ingredients are safe to use in your home.
✓ Buy fewer hazardous household chemicals. Look for signal words on the label. POISON means highly toxic. DANGER means extremely flammable or corrosive or highly toxic. WARNING or CAUTION means less toxic.
✓ Use multi-use products to limit the number of products in your home.
✓ Avoid using aerosol products with hazardous or toxic propellants.
✓ Use green cleaning products. Recipes to make green cleaning products at www.fcs.uga.edu/extension.

USE PRODUCTS SAFELY

✓ Read and follow the directions on the label.
✓ Use in a well-ventilated area. Fumes from products such as bleach can cause harm to the eyes, nose, throat, esophagus, respiratory tract and lungs when used in an enclosed space.
✓ Never mix products containing bleach and ammonia.

STORE PRODUCTS SAFELY

✓ Remember, hazardous products may be flammable, explosive/reactive, corrosive/caustic, toxic/poisonous or reactive. Follow label directions for proper storage.
✓ Leave the product in its original container with the original label attached.
✓ Never store household products in food or beverage containers, including homemade green cleaning and pesticide products.
✓ Store on high shelves or in locked cabinets out of reach of children and animals.
✓ Keep volatile products—those that warn of vapors and fumes—in a well-ventilated area.

DISPOSE OF PRODUCTS PROPERLY

✓ Batteries: Both alkaline and rechargeable batteries can be recycled.
✓ Gasoline and motor oil: These can be dropped off at automotive retail stores.
✓ Fluorescent lights: They contain small amounts of mercury and can often be dropped off for recycling in home improvement stores.
✓ Medications: Prescription drugs should not be washed down the sink nor flushed down the toilet, unless the patient information or label specifies otherwise. Improper disposal can result in water and soil contamination. Contact your local government to see if your community holds a prescription drug take back day.
✓ Work with your community to hold a hazardous household waste collection day.
✓ Find out where to take hazardous household items online at www.earth911.com or contact your local recycling or waste management provider.

Individually we can all make a difference by buying fewer products that contain hazardous ingredients and learning how to use alternative methods or products. Collectively we can have an even greater impact.

References

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