



# Got Toxic?

By Clifford Woods

Most households are full of **toxic products** that are quite hazardous to your health. These can be products that carcinogenic, and, and they are easy accessible to others in your homes. Disinfectants, air fresheners, and cleaners found beneath your kitchen sink are undeniably dangerous products, without you even giving them a serious thought. If you mix bleach with ammonia, you get a toxic fume cloud that was used by the military during World War I.

## Teflon Cookware

Non-stick cookware – when these non-stick pans were introduced into American households in the 1960s, they were believed to be godsend. Gone were the days of soaking pans and scouring for hours with steel wool. But in 40 years, we have become knowledgeable on the ease of this cleaning comes at a steep price; the coating that makes non-stick in Teflon pans is “polytetrafluoroethylene” or PTFE for short. When this chemical gets hot, it gives off toxic gasses linked to many types of cancers and other **health** complications.

## Use at Medium Heat

The problems with PTFE-coated pots and pans happens at high temperatures, so if you have to use Teflon, cook foods on only medium heat or less. The best option is to simply avoid these non-stick pans completely.

## Plastic Bottles

Another problem is plastic bottles that have dangers of BPA and these BPA mimics the effects of certain hormones that can be harmful to your endocrine system. Most manufactures have switched to BPA-free plastic. Single-use plastic bottles are worse for leaching chemicals, particularly when they are left in a hot car or used in a microwave.

## Oil for Plastic Bottles

Every year, barrels of oil equaling one million barrels are used to manufacture the more than over 25 billion single-use plastic water bottles used in the U.S. Try to find a glass bottle or stainless steel bottle instead.

## Oven and Store Cleaners

**Toxic** chemicals in cleaners for all-purposes often contain ammonia, which is a strong oxidizer, and burns the eyes and the skin. Another danger lies in cleaners for the oven, which can cause burns from chemicals and produce toxic fumes that are harmful to the respiratory system. Each year 120,000 children beneath the age of 5 are involved in incidents containing household cleaners. 2006 was the most recent year for data on these toxic products.

## Pest Control Products

Other **toxic products** are those that kill pests. These all have ingredients that are harmful to humans. The active ingredient in Round up weed killer is known to cause damage to the kidney and reproductive harm in mice. Raid, a common roach killer has cypermethrin that is known to

be an irritant to skin, eyes, and respiratory system and also has negative effects on the central nervous system.

### **Chemical Fertilizers**

Chemical fertilizers also are toxic and harmful to **health**. They also are noted for causing destruction to local water supply and are a known contributor to algal blooms. When the yard is watered or it rains, the runoff goes into storm-drains and this untreated water is dumped into rivers, ocean, and streams. This creates an inequality in the delicate water ecosystem that can kill fish and degrade water quality. If you have a lawn, it is best to use organic fertilizers.

### **Compost Pile**

Another alternative to harsh chemicals is to start a compost pile to create nutrient rich soil for flowerbeds and vegetable gardens. This is your own inexpensive fertilizer that can be created by letting little food scraps and yard trimming set. This also helps to divert waste from landfills.

These are only a few of the **toxic products** that can damage your personal and environmental health in various manners. Make an effort to get rid of them.

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