

## How Toxic is Your Average Laundry Detergent?

Posted By [Dr. Mercola](#) | July 12 2007 | 93,451 views

Typical laundry detergents may be imparting more on your clothing than a "fresh" scent. Most contain a toxic slew of chemicals that leave residues behind on your clothing that can potentially be absorbed by your skin or evaporated into the air for you to breathe in.

Most laundry detergents in your typical grocery store contain:

- Petroleum distillates (aka naphthas), which have been linked to cancer
- Phenols, which can cause toxicity throughout the entire body
- Artificial fragrances, which have been linked to various toxic effects on fish and mammals
- Phosphates, which stimulate the growth of certain marine plants when they're released into the environment and contribute to unbalanced ecosystems
- Optical brighteners, which can be toxic to fish and can cause bacterial mutations and allergic reactions

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If you pay attention to labels, you'll find that many [household products](#) -- from [lipstick](#) to paint to [shampoo](#) -- contain potentially toxic chemicals. In one study of 40 household products such as hair coloring, lipstick and paints, 34 contained chemicals such as glycols, organic solvents and [phthalates](#). None of these chemicals appeared on the label of the products.

Toxins are in the household products you use, and you are absorbing them through your skin and breathing them into your lungs. When most people think of pollution, they think of the outdoors -- garbage-choked streams or industrial waste. But you probably spend a large portion of your time indoors -- as much as 80 to 90 percent of your life. You work, study, eat, drink and sleep in enclosed environments where air circulation may be restricted. For these reasons, some experts feel that more people suffer from the effects of indoor air pollution than outdoor pollution.

Over time, these toxins can build up in your system and cause any number of unknown effects. But you can take control of your household environment.

That is one of the reasons why you will want to make certain that you have an outstanding source of ventilation in your office and home. Fortunately, newer building standards require a minimum number of air exchanges to pass the code. This is good because indoor air pollution is frequently worse than outdoor pollution.

The other sound measure you can avoid putting toxic chemicals in your home. Most people tend to discount how dangerous some of these chemicals can be and how much chronic degenerative diseases they cause like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Instead, seek out natural laundry detergents, cleaning products and toiletries from your local health food store (or use [items you already have around your house](#), like vinegar, baking soda, salt and lemon juice), and next time you're ready to do some housecleaning, check out these [tips to do it naturally](#).