

Clean up your act

IS IT NATURAL?

Don't be fooled by conventional household products adding natural ingredients for supposedly antibacterial purposes. Persil's concentrated washing up liquid, for example, has tea tree and peppermint added to the ingredients along with other, far less innocent antibacterial agents. It doesn't make the product any more safe or natural.

Be cautious of those would-be environmental products that heavily advertise biodegradability, as it is a statutory regulation and Peter Malaise, Ecover's Research and Development Manager, compares this with car dealers advertising that their cars have breaks. Of course biodegradability is a very positive thing, but it could be applied to pretty much anything which breaks down naturally. What is of concern to us is what the product breaks down into. The cleaning chemical nonylphenoethoxylate (NPE) is made only from carbon, hydrogen and oxygen and is biodegradable. However, there are suspicions that these mimic the endocrine hormones when breaking down, meaning it could disrupt the female reproductive system. Therefore, claiming biodegradable by no means guarantee's that a product is environmentally friendly. The best thing is to read products carefully and favour those which fully list all ingredients in their products. And remember those based on natural ingredients are more likely to be safer and breakdown more easily.

GREEN PEOPLE - MULTI-PURPOSE MICRO-FIBRE CLEANING CLOTH: This is a big green cloth which has over 1 million micro-fibres apparently making it more efficient than most.

It is absolutely brilliant and well worth investing in - apparently lasts for 300 washes. Use when dry as a duster - picks up dust without throwing it everywhere. Excellent for those annoying surfaces that constantly attract dust like the TV and PC. Use damp in conjunction with cleaning products - really helps in picking up dirt instead of just smearing it around. ★

FROM 21ST CENTURY HEALTH try the 'Clean House Clean Planet' cleaning kit. They provide five prettily labelled empty bottles with traditional recipes on the side to make your own simple and environmentally friendly products. The kitchen cleanser made from baking soda and lemon essential oil was somewhat effective. My flatmate and I cooed over the brilliant shine coming off our stainless steel taps, though were slightly disappointed with the streaky effect once

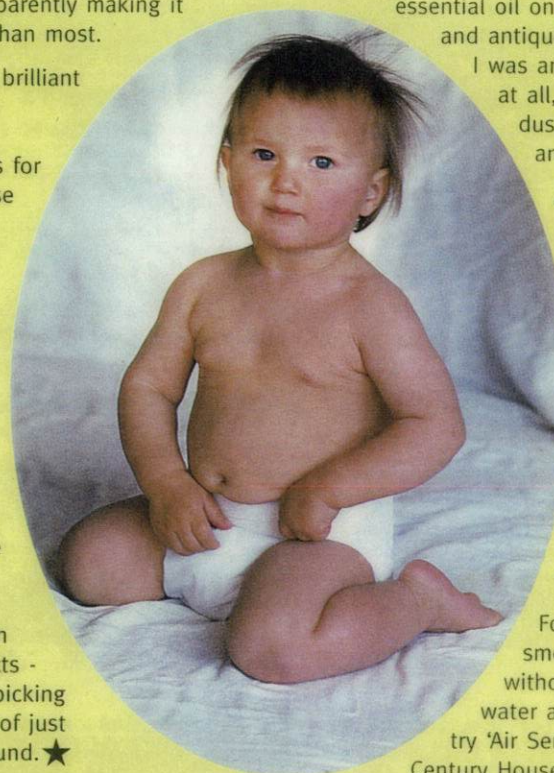
it had dried. I also tried out the furniture polish. I felt uneasy about using a combination of vinegar, olive oil and essential oil on my dressing table and antique wooden boxes, but I was amazed. No greasiness at all, apart from on the duster, and very effective and pleasant smelling.

Alternatively try the homemade recipes suggested by The Compassionate Shopping Guide for different household products. For example, white vinegar on spots or warm water with half a cup of washing soda on heavy soils.

For a naturally smelling air neutraliser without fiddling with oils, water and lighting candles try 'Air Sense' from 21st

Century House, a spray made from essentials oils and plant extractives with no artificial ingredients or synthetic perfume. 'Citrasolv' also sold by them is definitely worth trying. It's an incredibly effective cleaner and degreaser made from orange peel, (smells fantastic) but is a skin irritant. It has an incredibly diverse range of uses from cleaning the toilet to removing paint and worked wonders on my bike chain. ★

If you haven't yet tried Dr Bronner's Peppermint 18-in-1 Pure Castille Soap (21st



21ST CENTURY HEALTH

Century House), do. It has a ton of uses from washing up liquid and floor cleaner to shampoo and breath freshener, and is great for travelling. The bottle is crammed with quotes and ramblings on Dr Bronner's life philosophies and it is of course 100% natural and smells wonderful. ★

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Eco Products Ltd. tel: 020 8777 3121 www.ecozone.co.uk

21st Century Health tel: 020 7935 5440 www.21stcenturyhealth.co.uk

Earth Friendly Products tel: 01892 506994 www.greenbrands.co.uk

Nature Watch: Compassionate Shopping Guide tel: 01242 252871 www.naturewatch.org

The Natural Collection Mail order 0870 331 33 33 www.naturalcollection.com

"Scientists are worried that the increasing, and, some say, indiscriminate use of antibiotic agents to combat germs might lead to ever more resilient, or indeed resistant strains of bacteria against which we have no protection. Their concerns are mostly to do with hospital hygiene, but similar biocidal agents are rapidly being introduced into the home in the form of antibacterial coatings to kitchen utensils and equipment". "Microbiocides in the kitchen" (Ethical Consumer- April 2000)

The average American uses about 25 gallons of toxic products per year in their home (source: Prosperity without Pollution by Joel S. Hirschorn and Kirsten V. Oldenberg, 1991). (www.ecomall.com)

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