

Household Chemicals

What You Need to Know to Stay Safe



What are household chemicals?

Household chemicals include the variety of products used in the home. This includes:

- **Cleaning products**, such as: bleach, glass cleaner, drain cleaner, mold and mildew cleaners, and disinfectants
- **Pesticides**, such as: insect repellent and roach, ant, and other bug killers
- **Fertilizers**, such as: lawn or plant fertilizer

If I can buy household chemicals at the grocery store, how can they be dangerous?

Household chemicals can be very dangerous when stored or used incorrectly. It is important to never store leftover household chemicals in unlabelled or inappropriate containers, such as soda bottles. It is also important to use them as directed.

How can household chemicals be harmful to my health?

Household chemicals can cause a variety of serious health effects, depending on how you are exposed.

- **Inhalation:** chest tightness, coughing, burning, shortness of breath
- **Ingestion:** burns in the mouth, throat and stomach, nausea, vomiting
- **Skin Contact:** redness, burns, blisters
- **Eye contact:** irritation, watery eyes, burns

What do the warning labels mean?

Warning labels indicate the level of danger for an average sized adult following ingestion:

- × **Danger:** A taste to a teaspoonful can be fatal. These are the most dangerous.
- × **Warning:** A teaspoonful to an ounce (two tablespoons) can be fatal.
- × **Caution:** An ounce or more can be fatal.

***REMEMBER: Chemicals are even more dangerous to children, and in much smaller doses!**

What types of chemicals should I be concerned about?

All household chemicals can be dangerous if used incorrectly. However, chemicals that contain **chlorine** and **ammonia** are the cause of the highest number of reported chemical injuries each year. Both chlorine and ammonia are used as disinfectants, and can be found in products used for the same purpose. **When they are mixed, toxic fumes are released that can be very dangerous, and even fatal.** It is important to use these products separately.

What household chemicals contain chlorine and ammonia?

Chlorine is most commonly found in bleach, mold and mildew cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners, and disinfectants. Ammonia is most commonly found in glass cleaners, metal cleaners, and fertilizers.

How can I make sure myself and my family don't get injured using household chemicals?

Use chemicals properly. Wear a protective mask and gloves. Ensure there is adequate ventilation by opening windows and turning on fans. Stop use immediately if you experience abnormal symptoms.

Store chemicals properly. Never store leftover chemicals in unlabelled or inappropriate containers. Make sure they are stored out of reach of children and pets, and away from food.

NEVER mix products containing chlorine and ammonia together. Clean with one product at a time. Read all warning labels and use as directed.

To report a poisoning incident:

Florida Poison Information Center (800)222-1222
www.fpicn.org

For more information:

Florida Department of Health (850)245-2444
Chlorine Chemistry Council www.c3.org