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EUCALYPTUS MAGAZINE / OCTOBER 2009 / CLEAN YOUR HOME NATURALLY FOR YOUR PET'S SAKE

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Clean Your Home Naturally for Your Pet's Sake

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PHOTOGRAPH BY KYLE CHESSER

On the loose in your neighborhood, your cat or dog may face a number of hazards—cars, other animals, and poisonous plants are just a few. But just how safe is your pet inside your own home? That's a question many pet owners should ask themselves, especially when cleaning the house.

While many household cleaners are safe for cats and dogs, some can be very dangerous to your pets if ingested. In some cases, even inhaling the fumes can be harmful. Toilet bowl cleaners, for example, can burn your pet's mouth, tongue, and esophagus. Cats are particularly sensitive to products with chemical compounds known as phenols, such as Lysol and Pine Sol, because of the low detoxifying efficiency of their liver enzymes.

If swallowed by your pet, products with bleach can cause stomach upset, drooling, vomiting, or diarrhea. Inhaled in a high enough concentration, bleach-based products can also irritate a pet's respiratory tract. The ASPCA advises that the key to using household cleaners is to read and follow label directions for proper use and storage. Watch for labels stating: "Keep pets and children away from the area until dry." Follow these instructions to the letter.

Even better, consider natural and green products to protect your pet's health. While there are many that are available commercially, you can easily make your own to save money. You probably already have most of the ingredients in your home. Here are just a few basic cleaner recipes:

Carpets Sprinkle baking soda on carpeting with a flour sifter or shaker and let it sit for about 15 minutes before vacuuming.

General Cleanup Mix equal parts of white vinegar and water in a clean spray bottle. The solution makes a great all-purpose cleaner for countertops, quick cleanups all over the house, and even kitchen and bathroom floors.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner Mix 1/4 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, pour into the toilet basin, and let it set for a few minutes. Scrub with a brush and rinse. A mixture of two parts borax and one part lemon juice will also work.

Tub and Tile Cleaner Rub in baking soda with a damp sponge and rinse with fresh water. For tougher jobs, wipe surfaces with vinegar (use sparingly since it can break down grout). Follow with baking soda as a scouring powder.



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