

# Cleaning Supplies Can Contaminate Classroom Air

Ordinary school cleaning supplies can expose children to multiple chemicals linked to asthma, cancer, and other documented health problems and to hundreds of other air contaminants that have never been tested for safety, a study by the Environmental Working Group shows. Laboratory tests done for EWG found that a typical assortment of cleaning products released 457 distinct chemicals into the air.

EWG's findings come at a time when childhood asthma and many childhood cancers are on the rise.

Lax labeling requirements mean that schools often don't know what they're purchasing. Many would be alarmed to learn that when used as directed, Comet Disinfectant Powder Cleanser, a product commonly used in both schools and private homes, released more than 100 air contaminants, including chloroform, benzene, and formaldehyde.

In response to these concerns, many schools have turned to safer cleaning supplies that have been independently certified to meet protective health and safety standards. Eight states have passed legislation requiring or encouraging use of these green cleaning products in schools. Many other forward-thinking school districts have adopted green cleaning policies, replacing toxic products with safer, effective alternatives with no increase in costs.

Check out our report on health risks tied to school cleaning supplies, and learn about safer cleaning at school and at home.