# BREATHLESS

## THE HIDDEN COST OF CLEAN


ANGEL BRENNAN

# “Breathless: The Hidden Cost of Clean”

**By Angel Brennan**

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# Chapter 1: When Clean Isn’t Safe

## The Illusion of Cleanliness

In our pursuit of cleanliness, we've embraced a myriad of household cleaning products, trusting in their promises of a germ-free environment. Brightly colored bottles with fresh scents have become staples in our homes, symbolizing health and safety. However, beneath this veneer lies a disconcerting truth: many of these products harbor chemicals that may compromise our respiratory health.

## The Hidden Dangers in Cleaning Agents

Recent studies have illuminated the potential risks associated with regular exposure to common cleaning agents. One notable study by the American Thoracic Society found that women who regularly used cleaning sprays experienced a decline in lung function comparable to smoking a pack of cigarettes daily over 10 to 20 years . This decline was observed in both professional cleaners and individuals who cleaned at home. Wikipedia+1PubMed+1EWGRespiratory Therapy+3American Thoracic Society+3PubMed+3

The study analyzed data from over 6,000 participants across 22 study centers, tracking their lung function over two decades. The findings revealed that women engaged in cleaning activities had accelerated declines in both $FEV_1$ and FVC measurements, key indicators of lung health .Mayo Clinic News Network+5PubMed+5American Thoracic Society+5

## Understanding the Culprits

The primary offenders in these cleaning products are volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other harmful chemicals. VOCs are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids, including many cleaning agents. Exposure to VOCs can lead to a range of health issues, from eye, nose, and throat irritation to more severe effects like liver and kidney damage .American Lung AssociationWikipedia+2Health+2New York Post+2

Common household items releasing VOCs include:

- Aerosol sprays
- Air fresheners
- Chlorine bleach
- Detergents and dishwashing liquids
- Rug and upholstery cleaners
- Furniture and floor polishes
- Oven cleanersWikipedia+3American Lung Association+3Wikipedia+3

The American Lung Association emphasizes that these substances can contribute to chronic respiratory problems, allergic reactions, and headaches .American Lung Association

**A Personal Awakening**

For many, the realization of these hidden dangers comes too late, often after experiencing health issues. Recognizing the impact of these chemicals on our well-being is the first step toward change. By understanding the risks and making informed choices, we can protect ourselves and our loved ones from unnecessary harm. Wikipedia

**Moving Forward**

This book aims to shed light on the often-overlooked connection between household cleaning products and lung health. Through scientific studies, expert insights, and practical advice, we'll explore how to maintain a clean home without compromising our respiratory well-being.

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In the next chapter, we'll delve deeper into the anatomy of the lungs and how they function, setting the foundation for understanding how cleaning agents can affect respiratory health.

## Chapter 2: The Science of Breathing – How Your Lungs Work

### A Miracle in Every Breath

Every few seconds, without thinking, you perform a life-sustaining act: you breathe. Each breath brings in oxygen, fueling every organ and cell in your body, while removing carbon dioxide—a waste product your body must expel. This seemingly simple process is a complex biological miracle that occurs thousands of times a day. When compromised, even slightly, the effects ripple through every system of the body.

To understand how chemicals in our homes can harm our lungs, we first need to grasp how this intricate system functions and why it's so vulnerable to what we inhale.

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### The Respiratory System: A Delicate Network

The respiratory system includes the nose, mouth, sinuses, throat (pharynx), windpipe (trachea), bronchi, and lungs. Its primary job is to exchange gases: oxygen in, carbon dioxide out. Air enters through the nose or mouth, travels down the trachea, and branches into two bronchi—each leading to a lung. Inside the lungs, the bronchi divide into smaller and smaller bronchioles, eventually ending in tiny air sacs called **alveoli**.

It's here—in the alveoli—that the magic happens.

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### Alveoli: The Oxygen Exchange Hubs

Your lungs house about 300 million alveoli, each surrounded by capillaries. These microscopic sacs are where oxygen from the air you inhale passes into your bloodstream, and carbon dioxide from your blood passes out to be exhaled.

The alveoli have walls just one cell thick—so thin and delicate that anything inhaled, including harmful substances, can easily penetrate or damage them. This is why your lungs are especially susceptible to airborne toxins, irritants, and fine chemical particles found in many cleaning products.

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**The Body's Defense Mechanisms**

Fortunately, the body isn't defenseless. Your respiratory system has natural filters and cleaners built in:

- **Nasal hairs** and **mucus** trap larger particles before they reach your lungs.
- **Cilia**—tiny hair-like structures—line your airways and beat in rhythmic waves to push mucus (and trapped pollutants) upward and out.
- **Immune cells**, including macrophages, patrol the alveoli, engulfing and destroying harmful invaders.

However, these defenses can be overwhelmed. When you're exposed repeatedly to chemical vapors, synthetic fragrances, and toxic compounds, your body's defenses wear down—and the lungs can suffer chronic, sometimes irreversible, damage.

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**Why the Lungs Are Especially Vulnerable**

Unlike your digestive system, which breaks down and filters food before it enters the bloodstream, your lungs have no such buffer. When you inhale something harmful, it can reach your bloodstream almost instantly through the alveoli. This makes your lungs one of the fastest gateways for environmental toxins to enter your body.

Repeated or long-term exposure to irritants—like ammonia, bleach fumes, and aerosolized cleaning agents—can inflame the airways, scar lung tissue, and reduce lung function over time. In sensitive individuals or those with preexisting conditions, even short-term exposure can trigger asthma attacks or respiratory distress.

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**Children, the Elderly, and Vulnerable Populations**

Certain groups are more at risk:

- **Children** breathe more air relative to their body size, making them more sensitive to toxins.
- **The elderly** often have diminished lung capacity and slower repair mechanisms.
- **People with asthma or COPD** have airways already compromised, making them highly reactive to chemical exposure.

This makes choosing safer household products not just a personal decision, but a matter of family health and public responsibility.

**Breathing Is Not Optional—Protection Shouldn't Be Either**

Understanding how your lungs work highlights just how precious and fragile they are. Our goal is not just to inform—but to empower you to make safer choices for your home. The air you breathe indoors is often more polluted than outdoor air—yet this is where we spend 90% of our time.

In the next chapters, we'll reveal the specific chemicals found in everyday cleaning products and what studies say about their effect on your lungs and long-term health.

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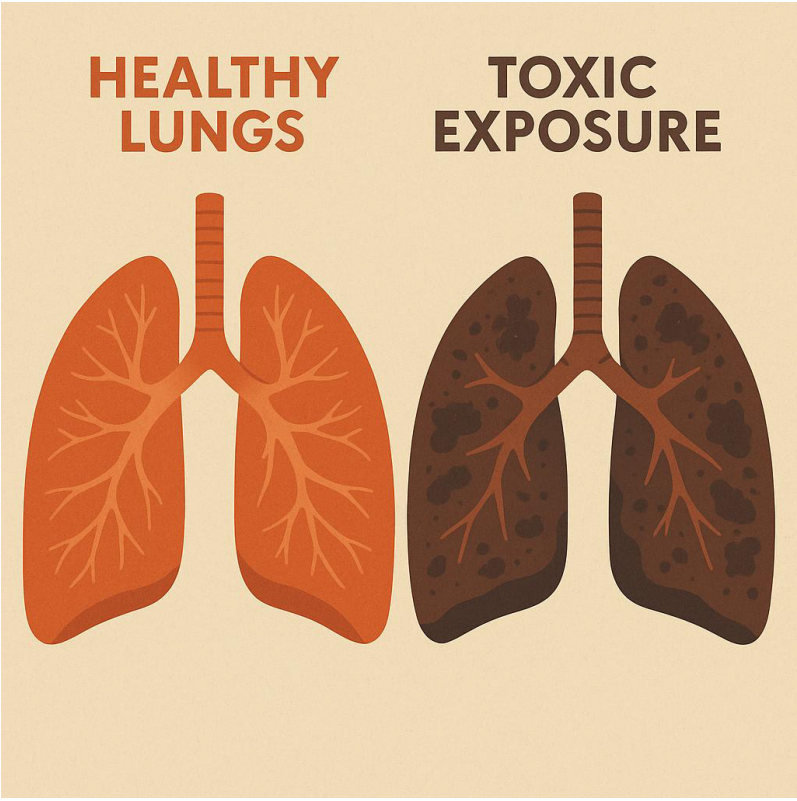
**Up Next: Chapter 3 – Toxic Cleaners and the Air You Breathe**
We'll dive into which chemicals are most harmful and what science says about their impact on your respiratory system.



## Chapter 3: Toxic Cleaners and the Air You Breathe

### The Truth Behind the Sparkle

Open a bottle of cleaner and you may get a burst of citrus, pine, or "fresh linen"—but what your lungs receive is something entirely different. The invisible cloud that fills the air when you spray, scrub, and wipe down surfaces contains a cocktail of chemicals that can linger for hours. Many of these substances have been linked to inflammation, reduced lung capacity, and long-term respiratory issues—yet they're still widely used in homes across the country.

What's worse? Most people have no idea they're breathing in danger.

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### What Studies Reveal: A Closer Look at the Evidence

A groundbreaking study from the European Community Respiratory Health Survey (2018), published in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, found that women who used cleaning sprays at least once a week over 20 years experienced a lung function decline comparable to smoking 20 cigarettes a day.

Key findings:

- Lung function (measured by $FEV_1$ and FVC) declined significantly faster in women using cleaning sprays.
- Occupational cleaners were especially at risk, but even home users experienced longterm harm.
- Sprays were more damaging than other forms (e.g., liquids or wipes) due to aerosolized particles being inhaled.

These results are echoed by research from institutions like the American Lung Association and the Environmental Working Group, which both caution against exposure to common ingredients in cleaners like:

- **Ammonia**
- **Sodium hypochlorite (bleach)**
- **Quaternary ammonium compounds (quats)**
- **2-Butoxyethanol**
- **Synthetic fragrances and dyes**

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**The VOC Problem**

Many of these chemicals are classified as **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)**. These are emitted as gases and contribute to indoor air pollution. VOC exposure can:

- Irritate eyes, nose, and throat
- Trigger asthma symptoms and allergies
- Increase risk of developing chronic bronchitis or COPD
- Cause fatigue, dizziness, and headaches

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) warns that indoor air can be 2 to 5 times more polluted than outdoor air due to the concentration of VOCs, especially in poorly ventilated spaces.

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**Aerosols: The Stealth Attack on Your Lungs**

Aerosol sprays disperse fine mist particles that remain suspended in the air for long periods—easy to inhale and nearly impossible to filter with casual ventilation. These particles travel deep into the lungs, bypassing your body's natural filters, and settle in the alveoli, where gas exchange occurs. Once absorbed, they can cause inflammation, scarring, and oxidative stress.

It's not just your lungs at risk. These chemicals can also:

- Accumulate in fat tissue and organs
- Affect hormonal balance
- Impact neurological and immune function over time

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**The Everyday Offenders**

Here's a quick snapshot of products that release harmful VOCs or irritants into your home:

| **Product Type** | **Typical Ingredients of Concern** |
|---|---|
| All-purpose cleaners | Ammonia, 2-butoxyethanol |
| Disinfectant sprays & wipes | Quaternary ammonium compounds (quats) |
| Bleach-based cleaners | Sodium hypochlorite |
| Oven and drain cleaners | Lye, chlorine, caustic soda |

| Product Type | Typical Ingredients of Concern |
| --- | --- |
| Air fresheners & scented candles | Phthalates, formaldehyde, artificial fragrance |

Even products labeled “green” or “natural” may contain harmful substances due to lack of regulation in labeling standards.

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**Real Consequences: Silent but Serious**

Many people exposed to these substances experience short-term symptoms—headaches, sore throats, wheezing—without realizing the long-term toll. Repeated exposure can damage the epithelial lining of the lungs, impair mucociliary clearance, and reduce the immune response of alveolar macrophages.

In those with asthma or compromised immunity, this can mean:

- Increased frequency and severity of attacks
- Higher risk of infection
- Decline in overall lung capacity

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**The False Security of “Clean”**

We’ve been sold a story that a clean home smells like bleach or floral freshness. But true cleanliness isn’t about artificial scents or chemical shine—it’s about safety. If your cleaning routine leaves your eyes watering, your chest tight, or your children coughing, it’s time to rethink what “clean” really means.

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**Coming Next: The Human Cost**

In Chapter 4, we’ll share real-life stories from individuals and families affected by toxic cleaning exposures. You’ll hear what the labels didn’t warn them about—and what they wish they knew sooner.

## Chapter 4: Real Stories, Real Damage – Case Studies and Testimonials

**When Health Takes a Hit at Home**

It's easy to think, *"Not me. That won't happen in my house."* But for many families, health problems didn't begin in factories or polluted cities—they began at the kitchen sink, in freshly mopped floors, and in the daily ritual of "keeping things clean." In this chapter, we turn the spotlight to the human impact—because statistics can be ignored, but real stories cannot.

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**Case Study #1: Jessica – The Stay-at-Home Mom with Chronic Cough**

Jessica always kept a spotless home. With three young children and a husband with allergies, she leaned heavily on antibacterial sprays, bleach solutions, and plug-in air fresheners. When a persistent cough developed, her doctors were baffled. Her chest X-rays were clear, and allergy tests showed nothing conclusive.

It wasn't until she read an article about VOCs and their link to respiratory issues that she began to connect the dots. She switched to plant-based, non-toxic cleaners and removed all synthetic fragrance products. Within a few weeks, the cough disappeared. Jessica now hosts local "Breathe Clean" workshops to help other moms make the switch before it's too late.

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**Case Study #2: Omar – The Janitor with COPD**

Omar had worked as a school janitor for over 25 years. He prided himself on his work, often volunteering to deep-clean classrooms and bathrooms. But over time, he noticed increasing shortness of breath—even while doing light tasks.

Eventually diagnosed with COPD, Omar learned that prolonged exposure to chlorine bleach, ammonia, and quats had inflamed and permanently damaged his lung tissue. His lung specialist confirmed what no one at work had ever warned him about: cleaning chemicals were the root cause.

Now medically retired, Omar's story underscores the importance of occupational safety and awareness. "If I had known the long-term damage, I would've demanded safer products," he says. "But we just thought cleaning meant chemical."

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**Case Study #3: Maria – The Teen with Triggered Asthma**

Maria's asthma had been stable for years, but during the pandemic, her mother increased home disinfection with strong commercial sprays. Suddenly, Maria began having attacks almost daily.

Her pulmonologist asked one question: *"What changed in your environment?"*

Once they stopped using aerosol disinfectants and switched to soap-based alternatives, Maria's asthma symptoms decreased dramatically. It wasn't her lungs failing—it was her environment overwhelming them.

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**Spotlight: What Doctors Are Seeing**

Pulmonologists and respiratory therapists across the country are reporting increases in nonsmoking-related lung inflammation—especially among women and indoor workers.

According to Dr. Emily Harris, a respiratory care specialist:

"We are seeing more cases of reactive airway disease and unexplained chronic cough in individuals who report heavy cleaning product use. The link is undeniable. It's no longer about just protecting yourself outdoors. The battle for lung health is happening inside our homes."

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**Not Just Anecdotes: The Growing Body of Evidence**

These stories are echoed in a growing body of research:

- The European Respiratory Journal published findings that even weekly use of household cleaners is associated with measurable lung function decline.
- The Environmental Working Group reviewed over 2,000 household cleaning products and found that more than 50% contained ingredients linked to respiratory harm.
- A 2022 Harvard study found elevated levels of indoor pollution in homes using fragranced cleaning sprays—even when windows were open.

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**Your Story Doesn't Have to Follow This Script**

Reading these stories might bring up questions—or even recognition. Maybe you've experienced unexplained breathing issues, frequent headaches, or asthma flare-ups. Maybe your loved ones have.

The important thing to know is: **you can change the story**.

Thousands of people are reclaiming their health by transitioning to non-toxic alternatives, improving indoor air quality, and becoming conscious consumers. The first step is awareness. The next is action.

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**Preview of Chapter 5: The Regulatory Gap**

In the next chapter, we'll explore how so many dangerous products made it into our homes in the first place—and why government agencies aren't always protecting us the way we expect. Spoiler alert: ingredient loopholes, trade secrets, and outdated laws play a big role.

## Chapter 5: The Regulatory Gap – Why Dangerous Products Still Line Store Shelves

### The Silent Greenlight

You walk into a store, browse the cleaning aisle, and choose a product you've seen advertised as "powerful," "fresh," or "safe for the whole family." You assume—logically—that if it's sold in stores, it must have been tested and approved by a government agency.

But here's the shocking truth: **many of the cleaning products on store shelves have never been fully tested for their long-term health impacts, especially when it comes to lung exposure.** The system meant to protect consumers is filled with gaps, outdated laws, and powerful industry lobbying. The result? A marketplace flooded with chemicals that can harm your lungs—and no requirement to warn you about it.

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### The Wild West of the Cleaning Industry

Unlike food or pharmaceuticals, **household cleaning products are not tightly regulated by the FDA** (Food and Drug Administration). Instead, oversight falls to the **EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)**—but even there, the laws have major blind spots.

Key issues include:

- **No requirement for full ingredient disclosure**: Manufacturers can label ingredients as "proprietary" or "fragrance," even if those components include known toxins.
- **Limited pre-market testing**: Most chemicals in cleaning products have not been independently tested for inhalation safety.
- **Fragmented oversight**: Some products fall under EPA rules, others under OSHA or the Consumer Product Safety Commission, leading to inconsistent enforcement.
- **Trade secrets trump transparency**: Companies are not obligated to list all ingredients due to protections for trade secrets, making it impossible for consumers to make informed decisions.

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### A Law That Hasn't Kept Up: The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)

Originally passed in **1976**, the **TSCA** grandfathered in **over 62,000 existing chemicals** without requiring any safety testing. Since then, only a fraction have been tested for their effects on human health—and even fewer for lung toxicity.

Though the TSCA was updated in 2016 through the *Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act*, the backlog remains enormous, and many dangerous substances are still in circulation.

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**The Fragrance Loophole**

One of the most troubling regulatory gaps lies in the word "**fragrance**." On a label, this word can legally hide **hundreds of chemical compounds**, many of which are VOCs or sensitizers.

These may include:

- **Phthalates** (linked to hormone disruption)
- **Formaldehyde releasers** (a known carcinogen)
- **Limonene and linalool** (can trigger asthma when oxidized)

The irony? These ingredients are often added not to clean—but to mask the chemical smell of other toxins in the product.

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**Industry Influence and Lobbying**

The multibillion-dollar cleaning product industry has invested heavily in lobbying efforts to resist stricter regulations. Industry groups often argue that their formulations are safe when used as directed, yet they fund very little independent research to back up those claims.

Furthermore, product safety testing—when it does occur—is often based on acute exposure, not **chronic, low-level inhalation over years**. This is exactly the kind of exposure experienced in real households, especially by women, children, and the elderly.

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**When Labels Lie by Omission**

Many products are labeled with feel-good phrases like:

- "Dermatologist tested"
- "Natural scent"
- "Eco-friendly"
- "Non-toxic"

These terms are largely **unregulated marketing language**—they have no legal definition and are not verified by any independent agency. Even the term "green" can be slapped on a bottle without proving environmental or health safety.

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**Consumer Confusion and Consequence**

With so little regulation, **the burden of protection has shifted to the consumer.** Yet most people don't have access to the scientific training, ingredient databases, or time required to vet every product they use. This regulatory failure disproportionately affects:

- Households with children
- Low-income communities with less access to clean air and green spaces
- Essential workers who clean for a living
- People with chronic respiratory or autoimmune conditions

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**Change Is Possible—but It Starts With Awareness**

There are growing movements calling for **full ingredient disclosure**, **third-party certifications**, and **safer product formulations.** But the wheels of reform move slowly, especially against the resistance of corporate interests.

That's why your awareness—and your voice—matter.

By choosing safer alternatives, supporting companies that practice transparency, and demanding policy change, you become part of the solution. Your purchasing power and advocacy can drive the industry in a better direction.

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**Up Next: Chapter 6 – Swap and Shop Safe**

In the next chapter, we'll guide you step-by-step through how to detox your home, swap out dangerous products, and rebuild your cleaning routine around safety, effectiveness, and peace of mind. You'll also learn how to join one of our *Swap and Shop Safe* events and begin your toxic-free transformation.

## Chapter 6: Swap and Shop Safe – Detox Your Cleaning Routine

**Small Swaps, Big Impact**

It doesn't take a total lifestyle overhaul to dramatically reduce your exposure to harmful cleaning chemicals. In fact, **a few intentional product swaps can be the difference between chronic lung irritation and clean, breathable air.** This chapter is your roadmap to safer living, showing you how to make smarter purchases, decode misleading labels, and confidently create a toxic-free cleaning routine.

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**The Power of the Swap**

For decades, we've been trained to think that "clean" must mean sterile, scented, and chemical-laden. But modern research—and many conscious consumers—are rewriting that narrative. Today, more people are reclaiming their homes with products that are simple, transparent, and safe.

**Swap and Shop Safe** is more than a checklist—it's a movement. A declaration that you don't need to compromise your health for a spotless kitchen counter.

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**5 Key Product Swaps to Breathe Easier**

| Instead of this… | Try this safer alternative… |
|---|---|
| Bleach-based disinfectant sprays | Hydrogen peroxide or alcohol-based surface cleaners |
| Ammonia glass cleaner | Vinegar and water (1:1 ratio) with a microfiber cloth |
| Scented air fresheners and plug-ins | Essential oil diffusers or open windows for fresh air |
| Antibacterial wipes with quats | Castile soap and water with reusable cloths |
| Harsh oven and drain cleaners | Baking soda paste, hot water, and elbow grease |

Each swap reduces your household's chemical load while still maintaining hygiene and functionality.

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**How to Read Labels with Confidence**

Many "green" or "natural" labels are little more than marketing language. Here's how to cut through the noise:

**Watch out for:**

- **“Fragrance” or “parfum”**: This word can legally hide hundreds of chemicals.
- **Vague terms like “non-toxic” or “eco-friendly”** with no certification.
- **Trade secrets**: If the product doesn’t list all ingredients, walk away.

**Look for:**

- **Full ingredient disclosure**
- **Third-party certifications** like EcoCert, MADE SAFE®, or EPA Safer Choice
- **Scent-free or essential oil-scented products**
- **Short, pronounceable ingredient lists**

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**Join a Swap and Shop Safe Event**

**Our live and virtual Swap and Shop Safe events** are designed to educate, empower, and connect communities. At each event, participants:

- Learn about hidden toxins in their homes
- Get hands-on experience making simple, safe cleaning products
- Swap out old products for verified safe alternatives
- Access exclusive discounts on trusted brands
- Connect with like-minded individuals on the same wellness journey

You’ll leave these events equipped with knowledge, tools, and products to start your own toxic-free transformation.

Visit https://angelbrennan.com/ or email **angelbrennancoaching@gmail.com** to find your nearest event or host one in your area.

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**DIY Cleaner Recipes to Get You Started**

Here are two easy, effective recipes you can make with ingredients from your kitchen:

**All-Purpose Citrus Vinegar Spray**

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 cup distilled water
- Citrus peels (lemon or orange) soaked in vinegar for 1 week
- A few drops of essential oil (optional)

Shake and use on countertops, sinks, and glass. (Avoid on natural stone.)

**Baking Soda Scrub**

- ½ cup baking soda
- 10 drops tea tree or lavender essential oil
- A splash of water to make a paste

Great for tubs, sinks, and stovetops. Rinse thoroughly.

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**Building Your Toxic-Free Cleaning Kit**

Here's what to stock up on to make your own safe-cleaning starter kit:

Glass spray bottles
Baking soda
White vinegar
Castile soap
Hydrogen peroxide
Essential oils (tea tree, lemon, eucalyptus)
Reusable microfiber cloths
Airtight jars for storage

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**Progress, Not Perfection**

Remember, you don't have to toss everything at once. Replace products as you run out. Each swap matters. With every choice, you're protecting your lungs, your family's health, and the planet.

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**Up Next: Chapter 7 – Breathe Easier: Lifestyle Shifts That Support Lung Health**

In the next chapter, we'll go beyond cleaning products to explore other indoor air hazards, lung-supporting foods, supplements, and simple changes that can improve your respiratory health.

## Chapter 7: Breathe Easier – Lifestyle Shifts That Support Lung Health

### More Than Just Products: A Holistic Approach to Respiratory Wellness

Swapping out toxic cleaning products is a powerful first step—but it's only part of the picture. True respiratory health is supported by a combination of clean air, nutrient-rich foods, supportive habits, and proactive self-care. In this chapter, we expand the conversation beyond cleaning chemicals to explore everyday changes that help your lungs function at their best—today and for years to come.

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### The Air You Breathe: Indoors vs. Outdoors

Did you know the EPA estimates that indoor air is **2 to 5 times more polluted** than outdoor air? With Americans spending up to **90% of their time indoors**, especially at home or work, the quality of that air directly affects lung function, immune response, and overall vitality.

**Common indoor air pollutants include:**

- VOCs from cleaning supplies, paints, and furniture
- Mold spores from damp bathrooms and basements
- Dust mites and pet dander
- Combustion byproducts from gas stoves or fireplaces
- Synthetic fragrance chemicals in candles, sprays, and detergents

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### Air-Cleansing Habits That Make a Difference

**1. Open Your Windows Daily**
Even just 15–30 minutes of cross-ventilation can dramatically lower VOC and carbon dioxide levels.

**2. Invest in Houseplants**
Certain plants like spider plants, peace lilies, and snake plants may help reduce toxins and improve humidity.

**3. Use HEPA Filters**
High-efficiency particulate air filters in vacuums, HVAC systems, or standalone purifiers capture microscopic allergens and irritants.

**4. Reduce Synthetic Fragrances**
Fragrance-free is best—but if you love scent, opt for essential oil diffusers and unbleached beeswax candles.

**5. Clean With Damp Cloths**
Dry dusting can reintroduce particles into the air. A lightly damp microfiber cloth traps more dust without chemicals.

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**Foods That Fuel Lung Function**

Just as poor air harms your lungs, the right nutrients can support, repair, and even protect your respiratory system. Your lungs are constantly exposed to oxygen, making them highly vulnerable to oxidative stress. Antioxidant-rich foods are your natural defense.

**Top lung-loving nutrients and their sources:**

| Nutrient | Why It Matters | Best Sources |
|---|---|---|
| Vitamin C | Strengthens immune function | Oranges, strawberries, bell peppers |
| Vitamin E | Protects lung tissue from damage | Almonds, sunflower seeds, spinach |
| Beta-carotene | Supports lung lining repair | Carrots, sweet potatoes, kale |
| Omega-3 fatty acids | Reduces inflammation in airways | Flaxseeds, walnuts, salmon |
| Magnesium | Helps open airways and supports breathing | Pumpkin seeds, black beans, bananas |

Staying hydrated is also essential—water thins mucus and helps the lungs expel contaminants more efficiently.

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**Lung-Supporting Supplements (Consult Your Healthcare Provider)**

- **N-Acetylcysteine (NAC):** Supports glutathione production, a powerful antioxidant in lung tissue
- **Quercetin:** A natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory flavonoid
- **Vitamin D3:** Linked to improved lung function and immunity
- **Cordyceps and Reishi mushrooms:** Known in naturopathy for supporting respiratory endurance and oxygen uptake

- **Beet Root:** Rich in nitrates and converts into nitric oxide. Helps with inflation and oxidative stress in the lungs.
- **Magnesium Glycinate:** Relaxes airway and is gentle on your digestion
- **CoQ10:** Boost lung cell energy
- **Glycine:** Relaxes the airways and is gentle on digestion
- **Clear Lungs Extra Strength:** Clears out mucus
- **Elecampane Root:** Short term phlegm relief
- **Melatonin:** Anti Oxidant and sleep aid

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**Breathwork, Movement, and Mindful Living**

Breathing deeply is something we rarely think about—but it's one of the most effective ways to strengthen your lungs and reduce stress.

**Try this simple breathwork routine:**

1. Inhale slowly through your nose for 4 counts
2. Hold your breath for 4 counts
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth for 6–8 counts
4. Repeat for 5 minutes daily

**Other beneficial practices:**

- **Regular exercise:** Even walking supports lung expansion
- **Yoga or tai chi:** Combines movement, posture, and breath
- **Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke**
- **Limit exposure to incense, candles, and fire pits**

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**Creating a Respiratory Wellness Routine**

Here's what a holistic lung-health lifestyle might look like:

**Morning:**

- Open windows for fresh air
- Practice 5 minutes of deep breathing
- Take your supportive supplements

**Afternoon:**

- Go for a walk or stretch outside
- Eat a colorful, antioxidant-rich lunch
- Hydrate consistently

**Evening:**

- Diffuse essential oils like eucalyptus or lavender
- Run an air purifier in the bedroom
- Avoid heavy cleaners, candles, or chemical sprays before bed

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**Empowerment Through Awareness**

Your lungs don’t just keep you alive—they fuel your energy, clarity, and emotional balance. When you care for them holistically, you breathe deeper, think clearer, and live more fully. As you implement these shifts, you’re not just avoiding harm—you’re actively building a healthier, more vibrant future.

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**Up Next: Chapter 8 – Join the Movement**

In the next chapter, we invite you to take this awareness and turn it into advocacy. You’ll learn how to raise awareness, share your story, and help others discover the path to toxic-free, lung-friendly living.

## Chapter 8: Join the Movement – A Call to Conscious Living

### Awareness Is Only the Beginning

You've learned the science, read the stories, and discovered the hidden threats lurking in your home. But now it's time for something even more powerful: **action**. You don't have to be a doctor, a scientist, or an activist to make a difference. You just have to care—and choose to act on what you now know.

This movement isn't about fear. It's about *empowerment*. It's about reclaiming your health, educating others, and using your voice to transform what it means to truly live in a "clean" environment.

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### You Are Not Alone

Across the globe, individuals are waking up to the toxic burden we've been sold as normal. Mothers, teachers, nurses, office workers, and entrepreneurs are joining forces to say:

"We deserve safer products. We deserve transparency. We deserve clean air in our own homes."

By joining the movement, you're aligning with a growing community committed to raising the standard for health and safety in everyday life.

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### Ways You Can Make a Difference

#### Start in Your Own Home

- Audit your cleaning cabinet and swap out one product at a time.
- Choose brands that are transparent and certified by trusted third parties.
- Use your purchasing power to support ethical companies.

#### Educate and Empower Others

- Share what you've learned with family and friends.
- Host a **Swap and Shop Safe** event in your community.
- Post your before-and-after stories on social media using #ToxicFreeTransformation.

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**Become a Resource**

- Build your own Toxic-Free Toolkit: recipes, checklists, and product guides.
- Recommend safe alternatives to those asking for advice.
- Partner with local organizations to offer community education.

**Advocate for Change**

- Support legislation that demands full ingredient disclosure and bans harmful chemicals.
- Write letters to your local representatives urging stricter household product regulations.
- Petition stores to remove dangerous products from their shelves.

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**A Personal Invitation: Toxic-Free Transformation Coaching**

If you're ready to go deeper, the *Toxic-Free Transformation* coaching program was created just for you. This immersive, step-by-step course helps individuals:

- Detox every room in their home
- Build health-supporting habits
- Read labels with confidence
- Rebuild their environment with intention

With tools, checklists, personal guidance, and a supportive community, you'll never feel like you're doing it alone.

Ready to lead a cleaner, safer life?
Visit **www.angelbrennan.com** or email **angelbrennancoaching@gmail.com** to begin your transformation.

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**Be a Lighthouse**

One of the most powerful gifts you can give is your example. When others see you living with more energy, breathing easier, and standing confidently in your choices, they'll want to know your secret.

That's how movements grow—not through perfection, but through people like you. People who care enough to question the status quo and build something better.

"When you light a lamp for someone else, it also brightens your path."
— Buddha

**Coming Next: Chapter 9 – Final Thoughts: Empowering Conscious Consumers**

In the final chapter, we'll reflect on the journey, reinforce what you've learned, and celebrate your steps toward becoming an informed, conscious consumer—and a protector of your own health.

## Chapter 9: Final Thoughts – Empowering Conscious Consumers

**Breathing with Intention**

Clean air. It’s one of the most basic human needs, yet it's often the first thing we compromise without even realizing it. From the products we spray to the candles we burn, the choices we make daily either support our lung health—or silently work against it.

Throughout this book, you’ve learned how cleaning products can compromise respiratory health, especially in the absence of transparent regulations. You’ve seen the science, heard the stories, and learned practical tools for creating a safer environment. Now it’s time to carry this knowledge into your life—not with fear, but with *intention*.

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**From Unaware to Empowered**

Transformation doesn’t come from perfection. It begins with *awareness*, continues with *small changes*, and grows through *consistent action*. Whether you swap out one product, host an event, or teach your child to read labels, you are building something better—not just for yourself, but for your entire community.

This journey of becoming a conscious consumer is a radical act in a world that profits from your unawareness. Every informed choice you make sends a ripple outward.

"You can't un-know what you've learned. But you can use it to create a future that breathes easier."

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**Conscious Living Is a Lifestyle**

Being a conscious consumer means more than choosing better products. It’s about living with a mindset that asks:

- What is this product made of?
- Who made it—and how were they treated?
- How will this affect my body, my home, and my planet?
- Am I supporting companies that align with my values?

When we begin to ask these questions, we shift from being passive participants to active creators of our reality.

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**You Are the Change**

The truth is, regulations may take years to catch up. Industry change is slow. But you don't have to wait. You are already part of the solution:

- By learning.
- By questioning.
- By sharing.
- By acting.

And perhaps most importantly, by *modeling* what empowered living looks like.

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**What Comes Next?**

If you've reached this final chapter, you've done more than read a book—you've started a movement within yourself. Whether your next step is detoxing your bathroom cabinet, educating your family, or joining our coaching program, know this:

You're not alone. A growing community is walking this path with you.

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**Let's Keep Going – Together**

**Join our Toxic-Free Living Coaching Program**
Get expert guidance, weekly resources, and a clear step-by-step roadmap to creating a healthy home.

**Attend or Host a Swap and Shop Safe Event**
Bring awareness to your local community and help others take their first step.

**Stay Connected**
Website: www.angelbrennan.com
Email: **angelbrennancoaching@gmail.com**

You are the lungs of this movement. With every breath, every decision, every conversation—you are creating a cleaner, safer future.

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**One Last Breath**

Breathe in.
Clean air. Empowered choices. Informed living.
Breathe out.
Toxic overload. Misleading labels. Fear.

And step forward into a life that honors the breath, the body, and the brilliance of conscious living.

## References and Resources

### Cited Studies and Medical Sources


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3. **Environmental Working Group (EWG)**. (2023). *Guide to Healthy Cleaning.* https://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/
4. **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**. (n.d.). *Volatile Organic Compounds' Impact on Indoor Air Quality.* https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/volatile-organic-compounds-impact-indoor-air-quality
5. **U.S. National Library of Medicine - PubMed**. (Various Studies). https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29451393/
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### Further Reading and Resources

- **MADE SAFE® Certification Program** – Products screened for human and environmental health. https://madesafe.org
- **EPA Safer Choice Program** – Helps consumers find cleaning products that perform well and are safer for human health. https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice
- **EWG's Skin Deep Database** – Ingredient scores for personal care products. https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/
- **CDC Indoor Environmental Quality Guidelines** – Tips for healthier indoor air. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/indoorenv

**Educational Tools and Coaching Programs**

- **Toxic-Free Transformation Coaching Program**

  A guided pathway to detox your home, understand ingredient safety, and build a wellness lifestyle.

  https://www.angelbrennan.com

  angelbrennancoaching@gmail.com

- **Swap and Shop Safe Events**

  Local and virtual educational events to empower safe product use. Learn more and sign up:

  https://www.angelbrennan.com/events

# BREATHLESS

## THE HIDDEN COST OF CLEAN

Every day, millions of people use household cleaning products to keep their homes spotless. But lurking behind the fresh scents and gleaming surfaces are hidden dangers for respiratory health.

*Breathless* reveals the scientific link between common cleaning chemicals and lung damage--and empowers you to make informed, safer choices that protect your lungs, your loved ones, and your peace of mind.

In this eye-opening guide, you'll learn how to detoxify your cleaning routine, support your lung function, and embrace a lifestyle free of hidden toxins.

ANGEL BRENNAN