

## Non-toxic Household Cleaners for People with MCS



**Regular household cleaners contain strong chemicals that are hazardous to people with MCS. We show simple alternatives that have proven their effectiveness and safety over many years.**

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There is an enormous number of cleaning agents available. Most of them are dangerous to people with MCS. Some cleaners are labelled as “green” in some way, but many of them are just “greenwashed,” i.e., it is simply a marketing ploy.

Some products include essential oils, which are considered “natural” by many. An analysis of 25 essential oils sold in Australia found nasty solvents in every single one, even those labeled “natural” or “organic.”

## 2 *Non-toxic household cleaners*

People with severe MCS have few safe options to choose from. We here present some that have been used for decades in MCS households. Most cost very little too.

### **Water**

A lot can be accomplished with plain tap water alone. It is nature's standard solvent and works fine for basic cleaning of tables, countertops, and tile floors. Just wet the area down, let sit for a minute and then wipe off.

Warm water works better than cold water. To dissolve grease you'll need scalding hot water, which may not be practical.

If the film of the water is wiped off with a fully dry rag, it should leave no mineral spots, even on glass mirrors.

Sometimes distilled water works better than tap water, if it has a high mineral content and still leaves a residue.

### **Baking soda**

Called "natron" in many parts of the world, the chemical name of this natural powder is sodium bicarbonate.

It is lightly alkaline and also used for baking and as an antacid for upset stomachs.

Add a sprinkling of baking soda to a bucket of water to soften it. This makes the water more effective at dissolving dirt.

Baking soda can also be sprinkled on a dirty surface and used as a mild scouring powder with a wet cloth.

For more difficult dirt, try to pack moist baking soda around the area. This can also help to bring out toxic chemicals from fabrics and plastics.

For clogged drains pour baking soda down the drain. Then add vinegar. The resulting eruption is caused by a harmless chemical reaction that generates carbon dioxide. Boiling water may also help dissolving grease.

### **Bon Ami (calcium carbonate)**

The brand Bon Ami has been sold since 1886 and it is still a popular scouring powder sold in grocery stores. It works well to clean bathroom and kitchen sinks,

tubs, tiles, stovetops and cookware, when you need something stronger than baking soda.

It also works for cleaning up oil spots, including on the hands.

Be aware that scouring powders can mar porous surfaces, such as natural stone and some plastics.

Bon Ami is more alkaline than baking soda and should not be ingested or inhaled.

### **Vinegar and lemon juice**

Vinegar and lemon juice are both lightly acidic and good for dissolving mineral deposits, such as around faucets and inside tea kettles.

Which one to choose depends on what is best tolerated. Some like the smell of one better than the other. White vinegar seems better tolerated than other types of vinegar.

For larger mineral deposits, cover the area with a soaked paper towel or cotton ball. Make sure to keep it moist while it sits for a few hours. In some places it may be possible to even create a puddle over the mineral deposit.

If the smell is a problem, close off the room, open a window or go for a walk while it works.

Diluted vinegar can also be used as a window cleaner. Put one tablespoon vinegar in one quart (liter) of water.

Vinegar and lemon juice should be used sparingly, or not at all, on surfaces that are not acid tolerant. This includes any type of natural stone (including granite), concrete, and metals that are not stainless steel.

### **Peroxide**

Hydrogen peroxide is an oxidizer that is good at disinfecting surfaces, drains and much else. It can also be used to bleach stains.

Don't expose hands to too much peroxide as the skin can become white and hurt.

It should not be used on porous surfaces, such as natural stone or unsealed concrete.

## **Vodka**

Alcohol is a solvent that may be needed on occasion. It is also a disinfectant (used in hospitals before the chemical age).

Vodka leaves less residue than most other types of alcoholic beverages.

High alcohol content is most effective. The brand Everclear is 95% alcohol.

## **Other options**

Cleaning products intended for other uses can often serve multiple functions. Some people use their shampoo or dish detergent for general cleaning, and even for washing clothes.

Traditional Castile soap is made of olive oil and lye, which works for some both on their skin and as a cleaner.

## **More information**

There are many other natural and homemade cleaners available. The books by Debra Lynn Dadd are excellent resources.

For more articles on non-toxic living go to [www.eiwellspring.org](http://www.eiwellspring.org)