

NONTOXIC LAUNDRY:

How to wash, whiten, and sanitize without harsh chemicals



WASH CYCLE

Safe Detergents: Use a simple, clear detergent that is free of fragrances, phthalates, phosphates, parabens, sulfates, and cationic surfactants. Check out the [*Environmental Working Group's Guide to Healthy Cleaning*](#) to check the toxic rating on your specific laundry detergent.

Hot Water Wash: For everyday use, wash clothes with a simple detergent in hot water. Hot water that is at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit for 25 minutes will kill most bacteria and viruses and will make the detergent work better.

Deodorize with Baking Soda: Pour 1/4 cup of baking soda into the machine with your detergent if you have an extra stinky load of laundry.

Cold Water Wash: If you have clothes and fabrics that cannot tolerate the hot water, use cold water instead, as this will be more energy-efficient. You can add one of the following sanitizers if you need to kill germs in your laundry load.

KILL GERMS

Mildly Sanitize with Lemon Juice:** Add 1 cup of lemon juice at the same time you add the detergent and clothes.

OR

Mildly Sanitize with Vinegar:** Add 1 cup of vinegar after the wash cycle, but before the final rinse cycle. Vinegar is also a nice fabric softener.

OR

Whiten and Disinfect with Hydrogen Peroxide:** Add 1 cup of hydrogen peroxide to the bleach dispenser. If you don't have a dispenser, fill the machine with water and detergent, then add the hydrogen peroxide. Add the clothes last.

DRY CYCLE

Best Dryer Cycle: If you wish to kill more germs after the wash cycle, run your dryer on high heat for at least 28 minutes. However, it is best to stick with a low heat setting, since high heat is harsh on fabrics and is less energy-efficient.

Dryer Sheets: A lot of brand name dryer sheets contain and release toxic chemicals (e.g., formaldehyde). Search specifically for unscented, nontoxic dryer sheets.

Dryer Balls: Wool dryer balls can also replace dryer sheets. Infuse the balls with a few drops of essential oil if you want.

Do-it-Yourself Dryer Sheets: Dampen a towel with vinegar and essential oil and toss it in with your dryer load. Make a batch of these towels ahead of time and store in a well-sealed container.

Line Dry in the Sun:

Alternatively, you can hang your wet clothes outside to dry, so the fresh air can blow out bad smells and the ultraviolet light can help destroy pathogens, too.

****While these options have been shown to kill germs, they are less effective than regular bleach and are not registered with the EPA for laundry purposes.****

Adapted from the book "Spotless: Nontoxic Cleaning for a Healthy Home" by Wealhouse Publishing Company.

