

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

4.2 Toxics in the Home: Instructions and Data

After obtaining your parents' permission to do so, survey your home for products that may contain hazardous substances. Record your findings on the data table below. As you do so, note any containers that are leaking, labels that are falling off or difficult to read, or chemicals that have passed their expiration date. (Don't touch any leaking containers!) Report these to your parents and recommend that the problem be fixed or the expired chemical properly disposed of. There are many types of toxic chemicals in most homes, but be sure to look for these:

Paints, solvents, cleaners, medicines, pesticides, glues, automotive chemicals

Also note what chemicals the products contain, any warnings on the label, the condition of the container and label, and whether it is stored safely.

Area of House	Product(s) Found	Contents Chemicals	Warnings on Label	Condition of Container and Label; Stored Safely? Notes
Kitchen				
Bathroom				
Garage				
Other				

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Activity 4.1: Toxics in the Home (Continued)

Household Hazardous Materials Chart			
Substance	Problem	Proper Disposal	Alternatives
Abrasive cleaners, scouring powder	CORROSIVE; TOXIC	Use it all up. Rinse container.	Use baking soda or borax, lemon juice, toothpaste for small stains.
Ammonia-based cleaners	CORROSIVE; TOXIC	Use it all up. Contact waste disposal company.	Use white vinegar diluted with water, elbow grease. NOTE: DON'T MIX AMMONIA-BASED CLEANERS WITH BLEACH!
Chlorine or bleach-based cleaners	CORROSIVE; TOXIC	Use it all up. Contact waste disposal company.	Use dry bleach, white vinegar, baking soda, or borax. NOTE: NEVER MIX BLEACH OR CHLORINE WITH AMMONIA!
Drain openers and cleaners	CORROSIVE; TOXIC	Use it all up. Contact waste disposal company.	Pour boiling water down drains, use plunger or "snake."
Oven cleaners	CORROSIVE; TOXIC	Use it all up. Contact waste disposal company.	Clean oven as you use it. Use oven liner to catch drips. Use baking soda for scouring.
Spot cleaners	FLAMMABLE; TOXIC	Use it all up. Contact waste disposal company.	Use club soda, lemon juice, cornmeal and water paste, dry clean.
Antifreeze	TOXIC	Recycle.	None
Engine degreasers, cleaners, solvents	FLAMMABLE; TOXIC	Recycle. Contact waste disposal company.	Scrub with a brush, catch spills on a rag, fix leaky gaskets.
Motor oil	FLAMMABLE; TOXIC	Recycle.	None. Fix leaky gaskets.
Enamel or oil-based paints	FLAMMABLE; TOXIC	Use it up or donate it. Contact waste disposal company.	Use latex or water-based paints.
Latex or water-based paints	TOXIC	See above. Allow "empty" can and painted item to dry outdoors.	Use limestone-based whitewash or casein-based paints.
Thinners, solvents	FLAMMABLE; TOXIC	Use it all up. Recycle. Contact waste disposal company.	Keep used solvent in closed jar until sludge settles, pour off and save the reusable solvent.
Aerosol spray cans	FLAMMABLE	Use it all up. Contact waste disposal company.	Use equivalent products without aerosols; use atomizers.
Drugs and medicines	TOXIC	Use per directions. Contact waste disposal company.	Unknown.
Pesticides, poisons, insecticides	TOXIC	Contact waste disposal company.	See any of the numerous books on "organic" pest control.

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4.3

Toxics in the Home: Questions

1. What were the most common hazardous chemicals in your home and class?

2. Circle the hazardous or toxic chemicals you found:

Drain cleaner

Laundry detergent

Furniture polish

Paint

Baking soda

Hair spray

Air fresheners

Ant spray or stakes

Alcoholic beverages

Aspirin

Cold capsules

Tobacco products

Bleach

Floor polish

Snail bait

3. Tell what you would do in the following situations:

a. A small child has swallowed several aspirin.

b. A friend is sick from a drug overdose.

c. You have a container of a hazardous chemical that you want to dispose of.

d. Some unknown powder has spilled from a truck driving down your street.

e. You have been using a chemical and you feel ill.

f. Your parents have some toxic chemicals that they want to keep at home.

g. You have an old computer, monitor, and some printer cartridges to dispose of.

4. What can you do to reduce the hazards of toxics in your home and to the environment?
