

Some cleaning products can cause breathing problems such as asthma.

find out more...

LEARN HOW TO
REDUCE
YOUR RISK !

- Visit our website: www.ohsah.bc.ca/asthma
- Look up the hazards associated with any chemical product in your hospital on the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare's MSDS database: www.ohsah.bc.ca/533/1402
- Contact the WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line to learn how to reduce your risk: 604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland or toll-free: 1 888 621-7233 in B.C.
- Discuss this issue with your union, occupational health and safety committee, or supervisor.



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301 – 1195 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6H 3X5
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HOSPITAL CLEANING PRODUCTS &

asthma

What you
should know



do you work in
a hospital ?

do you work with
cleaning products ?



Which products are risky?

A product is more likely to pose a risk when:

- It is used in a spray bottle
- You have to mix it with water yourself
- It has a pine or citrus scent
- It contains any of these chemicals (check the MSDS): ammonium chloride compounds (also known as "quats"), tri- or mono-ethanolamine, d-limonene



Watch out for these cleaning products!

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ✗ Attac uhs Stripper | ✗ Protein Spotter |
| ✗ Bravo Power Foam | ✗ Quik Fill 920 |
| ✗ Crew Neutral NA | ✗ Spitfire NB SC |
| ✗ Delible Ink Remover | ✗ Spitfire RTU Power Cleaner |
| ✗ Freedom | ✗ UHS Cleaner |
| ✗ Freedom SC | ✗ Virex |
| ✗ Glance Glass & Surface Cleaner | ✗ [Redacted] |
| ✗ Low and Behold | ✗ WesGold |
| ✗ Natrasolve Degreaser | |

According to research done in BC, these are the most hazardous products used by hospital housekeepers. How hazardous a chemical is depends on how it is applied, how it is diluted, and what it contains. Exposure to these products may, or may not, cause you to develop occupational asthma.

This information is accurate as of October 2007. Composition of the products, and associated risks, may change.

What can I do?

If you currently work with any of these high-risk products, talk to your supervisor. Ask if there are lower risk alternatives. **You have the right to know!**

If you must work with these high-risk products,

- talk to your health and safety representative,
- reduce the amount of product that gets into the air or on your skin (avoid spraying, open mixing, contact with bare skin),
- and ask to be fitted for appropriate personal protective equipment.

If you have asthma or breathing problems, visit your doctor **(and take this brochure!)**. Making changes at your workplace can relieve your asthma, so it is important to get the help you need.

Research done around the world and in BC finds hazards for hospital cleaners

Our study of hospitals in BC provides important information to employees who work with cleaning products.

By gathering information about hospital cleaning from housekeepers and health & safety directors, we were able to identify risks. Our research shows that some of the products used by hospital housekeepers are hazardous. These cleaning products can lead to the development of work-related asthma, or make previous asthma worse.

Asthma is a lung condition with symptoms such as wheezing, coughing, or shortness of breath. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be managed or prevented.