

Personal & Home Care: Green, Clean, & Cheap!

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Most Commonly Used Ingredients

1. Baking Soda: It is an effective cleaner and deodorizer for your body and your home! It is too alkaline for fungal and bacterial spores to germinate (grow). Sweat is acidic and is neutralized by the alkalinity of baking soda. For teeth, it's a very mild abrasive (less abrasive than commercial toothpastes) that dislodges plaque on teeth, breaks down stain-causing molecules, and neutralizes pH.
2. Vinegar. Yep, plain white vinegar. Kills most germs on contact. With baking soda, it can clean most everything in your home.
3. Corn Starch or Arrowroot Powder: Both powders are highly absorbent and absorb any moisture left behind by your sweat. A dry environment is much less friendly to bacteria and fungus.
4. Bentonite Clay: don't use with metal spoons, containers, etc. or the clay deactivates. The clay draws out toxins, contains calcium, and is often used to remineralize teeth.
5. Shea Butter: great moisturizer.
6. Cocoa Butter: great moisturizer.
7. Optional: 100% Essential Oils-- *Tea Tree Oil* is both antibacterial and antifungal according to the National Center for Biotechnology Information. Also, *Eucalyptus Oil* has been used as both an antiseptic and antifungal according to the [University of Maryland Medical Center](#).

Body Care Products—Purchased or Homemade

Body Soap

- Meliora All Purpose Soap Bar (unscented)—at Fullfillery or [online](#).
- Dead Sea Mud Bar Soap (fragrance-free)—at TPSS Co-op or [online](#).

Dental Care

Toothpaste or Powder

Tooth Powder: Mix equal parts baking soda + bentonite clay or vary to taste. (No metal, which deactivates the clay.)

- Blend with no metal and store in a non-metal container.
- Place about 1/8 teaspoon of the powdery blend in the palm of your hand. Moisten your toothbrush and dunk it into the blend in your hand. Brush, dipping again as needed.
- If you don't like the taste, add an equal amount of xylitol, a natural sweetener.

Dental Floss

My choice is Dental Lace brand's "[plant-based](#)" (non-silk) [refillable floss](#). It's biodegradable and commercially compostable. Get it at the Fullfillery in Takoma Park or online.

Toothbrushes

I use an electric because my teeth aren't straight, making non-electric cleaning uneven. But MOMs and similar stores have eco-friendly toothbrushes. Seek minimal packaging & biodegradability. [Going Zero Waste](#) recommends bamboo.

Mouthwash for Grownups Only

- Place in a jar one cup of cold water per green tea bag or 1 Tablespoon of loose green tea.
- Refrigerate or leave at room temperature for two hours. (Video: [Cold Steeping Green Tea](#))
- Rinse your mouth or gargle.
- Store in the refrigerator.
- Optional add-on: You can add a spoonful of amla powder and swish and swallow a few times a day.



Why not for kids? [Childhood Tea Drinking May Increase Fluorosis Risk](#), NutritionFacts.org, June 14, 2013; the natural fluoride content of the plant may cause cosmetic spots on the teeth.

“No-poo” Hair Wash: Aloe Vera & Epsom Salt

[This website](#) lists 10 common simple, DIY hairwash formulas with links to more. If you want to go no-poo, please contact me for more info; hundreds of recipes exist, and the one right for your hair and scalp varies. Also, the transition takes time. Below is my favorite these days, because Epsom salt adds volume to hair and aloe vera is moisturizing.

- Mix about 1 teaspoon Epsom salt with 1 or 2 tablespoons aloe vera gel.
- Add a little water to get the desired consistency (optional).
- Massage into scalp and hair.
- Rinse with water.
- Optional Rinse: massage into hair 1 Tablespoon of apple cider vinegar + 1 cup water.
- Optional Conditioner: I sometimes mix 1/8 tsp. of coconut oil + 2 tsp. aloe gel, rub it onto my palms, then hand-comb it through my hair, esp. the ends.

Why Not Shampoos?

[The Worst Shampoo Ingredients Explained: Parabens, Sulfates, Alcohol](#) (also fragrances)

Dry Shampoo

[Source and details.](#)

- 1 Tablespoon bentonite clay
- 1 Tablespoon organic cornstarch or arrowroot powder
- for dark hair only, add 1 Tablespoon of cocoa powder (may stain clothes!)

Deodorant for Underarms

[Source and details.](#)

Notes: Bentonite clay: don't use with metal spoons, containers, etc.

Zinc Oxide: add 1 to 3 tsps if you find the baking soda irritating

1. Mix equal parts baking soda + corn starch or arrowroot powder. Apply with your hand or a hand-crocheted powder puff, but be careful not to inhale.
2. Mix 2 parts coconut oil + 2 parts baking soda + 1 part aloe gel. (Thanks, Bruce!)
3. Mix equal parts coconut oil + shea butter + baking soda + cornstarch or arrowroot powder + aloe gel.

Deodorant for Feet and Shoes

Sources: [Holly Hammersmith](#) and [Brendid](#).

- Baking Soda
- Corn Starch (or Arrowroot Powder)
- Optional: 100% Tea Tree and Eucalyptus Oils

To Use: Toss a small amount into each shoe after wearing them to absorb any moisture. Tap the shoe (left, right, top and bottom) to get the powder to cover the entire shoe and not just sit in one spot. Then let the shoes sit with the powder in them until the next time you wear them. Prior to the next wear, dump the excess powder from the shoes into the trash and put them on.

Use By: No known end storage limit on the foot powder; don't keep the same batch for years, but it should last several months.

Cost: About \$0.98 for 1/2 of a cup. That's about \$0.08 for the baking soda, \$0.40 for the corn starch and approximately \$0.50 for the essential oils. A similar natural foot powder costs \$14.49 for 4 ounces.

Easy Recipes for Cosmetics

First question for all cosmetics is "Do I really need to wear make-up?"

Lip Balm

Shea butter + cocoa butter. Blend ½ teaspoon of each and store in a small tin.

Lipstick

Shea butter + cocoa butter + beet powder. Blend ½ teaspoon of the butters and as much beet powder for desired color. Store in a small tin.

Eyeliner

Sources: [WikiHow](#) and [DIYNatural](#)

For black: Activated charcoal + distilled water or aloe or any oil (coconut, almond, jojoba)

Caution: do not inhale charcoal powder. This charcoal is not what you use on the grill!

For brown: Unsweetened cocoa powder + water or aloe or any oil (coconut, almond, jojoba)

For green: Spirulina powder + water or aloe or any oil (coconut, almond, jojoba)

Storage and Use

- You can mix a batch and put your eyeliner in a small jar or tin.
- Refrigerate when not in use; compost after a few weeks or so, a month at most.
- Remove only what you will use in the moment rather than re-dip your brush into the whole batch. Bacteria can develop if you use it straight from the container, much the same as mascara.
- Clean your brushes well and allow them to air dry.
- Don't use eyeliner on the inner eyelid, just on the outside of the lashes; avoid getting it in your eyes. It may not cause permanent damage, but it can be very irritating.

Eye Shadow

[WikiHow](#)—Scroll to Method 2, *Using Shea Butter + Arrowroot Powder*

[The Rogue Ginger](#)—Recipes vary by desired color, using mostly spices! You can use the same recipe as for Eyeliner (above) using just the powders with no water, aloe, or oils.

Blush, Bronzer, Mascara

[GreenMatters](#)

Hair Color – Temporary

[WikiHow](#)—Using food dyes!

[The Rogue Ginger](#)—Using mostly spices! Eyeshadow recipes that can be used for hair color. Add beet powder for red.

Easy Recipes for Your Home

Laundry

Notes: -- Beware of greenwash; products seem eco-friendly but aren't. Always check the Environmental Working Group database (see Resources at end).
-- Avoid fabric softeners and dryer sheets and dryer balls. Air dry on drying racks.
-- Wash in cold water unless hot water is absolutely necessary.

Detergent: Meliora Laundry Powder, unscented, from Fullfillery. Also, Soap Nuts (MOMs).

Stains: Vinegar and Ecos brand Oxo Brite (TPSS Co-op, MOMs)

Clothes Whitener: Avoid bleach, which harms you and the water supply. Soak white clothes for 30 minutes in the washer with 1/2 cup 3% hydrogen peroxide. Launder as usual.

Toilet

Source: [ZeroWasteCartel](#)

Two ingredients: 1 cup distilled white vinegar + ½ cup baking soda

1. Add both ingredients to a large bowl and whisk together well.
2. If storing for later use, use a funnel to transfer solution into a bottle to store.
3. To use, pour into the toilet and leave to soak for about 5 minutes.
4. Scrub toilet with a toilet brush and flush.

Everything Else

Scrub with baking soda and a rag or cleaning brush, then pour or spray vinegar. Seriously.

More Resources!

#1: Free, online consumer guide to health and eco-impacts of many products: [Consumer Guide Database](#), Environmental Working Group.

Free recipes and tips via online searches: [WikiHow](#) is amazing, or search by typing in item plus “DIY zero waste”, such as “DIY Zero waste lipstick.” Beware of fragrances and essential oils—these are usually unnecessary, expensive, and unhealthful, even “organic” and “natural” ones.

[Going Zero Waste](#)

[Non Toxic Cleaning Products & Disinfectants](#), WomensVoices4theEarth.

[Types of Clays](#) (for Cosmetics, face masks, etc.)

[The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry](#), Stacy Malkan, Aug. 24, 2017.

[Campaign for Safe Cosmetics](#)