

# WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM TO FIGHT ALLERGIES



# ABSTRACT

If you have seasonal allergies, chances are you've spent plenty of time cruising drugstore aisles looking for relief from allergy symptoms. You know just how wide a variety of medications there are — both over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription — for seasonal allergies. What's less well known is that you may also be able to get allergy relief by building up your defenses against them. Check out these tips to enhance your immune system and send allergies packing.

## INTRODUCTION

Do you suffer from seasonal allergies? Have you been trying to find the best solutions to get relief from the allergy symptoms? Although different forms of medicines can be used for treating seasonal allergies, it is important to understand that allergies can be eliminated by building the body's immunity against them. Here are tips you can follow to boost your immune system to get rid of the seasonal allergies.

### I. 10 Allergic Reaction Symptoms You Should Never Ignore

Allergies are tricky. Sneezing, coughing, and an upset stomach are just a few of the common allergic reaction symptoms that an estimated 50 million of us deal with at any time during the year, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (ACAAI). But they're easy to mistake for other issues like a bad cold, the flu, COVID-19, or a food intolerance. And if it's been a while since you last saw a doctor or you don't have the time for an appointment, you may have just learned to live with the symptoms.



Although allergies often first arise in childhood, they could emerge at any time, the ACAAI notes. Symptoms can range from mild annoyances (typically spurred via environmental allergens like pollen or mold) to a severe and life-threatening medical

emergency (typically spurred via food allergies, the most common trigger of anaphylaxis). That's why it's worth paying attention to the signs of an allergic reaction.

Left untreated, allergies can also lead to worsening symptoms of related conditions like allergic asthma or chronic sinus infections. They could also disrupt your sleep and in turn your mood, energy levels, and overall health.

There's no need to suffer endlessly, though. Coping tools and treatment can help you get your symptoms under control. Learn everything you need to know about allergic reaction symptoms, the causes, and how you can prevent them.

## What is an allergic reaction?

"An allergic reaction is when your immune system becomes hypersensitive to something," Purvi Parikh, MD, an allergist and immunologist with the Allergy & Asthma Network, tells SELF. Your immune system helps defend your body against potentially dangerous intruders like bacteria and viruses. But sometimes it mistakes certain harmless substances as threats. These are known as allergens.



As a result, your immune system creates Immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies, which are special proteins in the blood that activate to "protect you" from these "enemies," Amina Abdeldaim, MD, a board-certified allergist, tells SELF. They dock on a special allergy cell called a mast cell, which then releases chemicals that cause the allergic reaction, including histamines and other proteins, Dr. Abdeldaim says. As they flow through your bloodstream, your blood vessels expand, causing swelling and irritation in the affected area.

It's this chain of events that's responsible for the distressing allergy symptoms that follow. Allergic reactions can arise after you inhale, eat, drink, or touch something you've developed a sensitivity to.

Allergic reactions don't always happen the first time you're exposed to a potential allergen. For example, initially, a bee sting may only cause a little red bump and mild discomfort at the sting site. But after your body has logged bee venom as a dangerous substance, your next bee sting could cause a more severe reaction like hives or trouble breathing.

## What causes an allergic reaction?

Scientists also aren't sure why certain substances cause allergies and others don't, per the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology. What is known is that the biggest risk factor for having an allergic reaction is having a family history of allergies.

Common allergens include foods like cow's milk; hen's eggs; peanuts; tree nuts; wheat; soy; fish or shellfish; pollen and mold; pet dander; dust mites; insect venom from bees, wasps, hornets, and ants; latex; and medications such as antibiotics, aspirin, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen.

## What are the most common allergic reaction symptoms?

Symptoms of an allergic reaction can range from mild, localized flare-ups in a specific part of your body to severe allergic reactions that set off alarm bells throughout your body. Here's what to look out for.

### Congestion, sneezing, and a runny nose

When you breathe in an allergen like tree pollen, mold, or dust, your immune system triggers the release of histamines from cells inside your nasal passageways, Dr. Abdeldaim says. This causes "allergic rhinitis," or inflammation in your nose, and in turn an uptick in the production of mucus. Seasonal and year-round allergens alike can trigger an itchy, stuffed-up nose, sneezing attacks, and postnasal drip (that uncomfortable sensation as mucus from your sinuses trickles down your throat).



You might feel like you just have the common cold, Dr. Tam says. But one way to tell the difference is that a viral infection typically clears within one to two weeks, whereas allergy symptoms are chronic and could last for several weeks.

### Itchy, irritated eyes

If allergens like pet dander or dust mites make their way into your eyes, histamines could flare up and make them swollen, red, itchy, and watery, Marc F. Goldstein, MD, a board-certified allergist and immunologist at The Asthma Center in Philadelphia, tells SELF. This is called allergic conjunctivitis because allergens cause the protective covering of the eye and eyelid—the conjunctiva—to swell. Your eyes might also feel like they're burning or more sensitive to light.

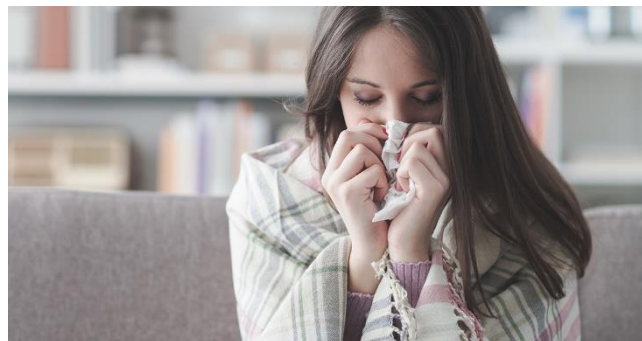
### A rash

The release of histamine can also make your skin itchy, Sanjeev Jain, MD, PhD, a board-certified allergist and immunologist at Columbia Allergy in California, tells SELF. In fact, irritated skin is one of the most common signs of an allergic reaction whether you've eaten, inhaled, or brushed up against an allergen.

Symptoms can vary. You may develop dry, itchy patches due to eczema after your skin's been exposed to an irritant or allergen, or you could have itchy, red bumps or hives.

### Trouble breathing, coughing, and wheezing

If histamines make their way to your lungs, they could also trigger asthma symptoms like shortness of breath and coughing fits, Dr. Tam says. If you're one of over 25 million Americans with asthma, allergens (like cockroaches, pet dander, mold, and dust mites) are also one of the most common triggers for trouble breathing and wheezing. Even food allergies can cause asthma-like symptoms.



## Gastrointestinal distress

Within minutes, even a small amount of food—like a sip of milk, traces of eggs, or peanuts—could trigger an allergic reaction in your G.I. tract. Inflammation in your stomach could cause symptoms like cramping, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and even diarrhea, Dr. Goldstein says.

It's easy to confuse food allergies with food intolerances. But food intolerances tend to be limited to G.I. issues while food allergies often come with additional symptoms like tingling or itching in your mouth, swelling in your mouth and throat, itchy skin, hives, wheezing, nasal congestion, trouble breathing, and even dizziness and fainting.

## Anaphylaxis

Finally, one important cluster of symptoms to be aware of is anaphylaxis, Dr. Tam says. This severe allergic reaction is life-threatening, so immediate emergency medical attention is a must. Anaphylaxis is most commonly caused by foods, insect stings, medications, and latex allergies.

Signs of anaphylaxis typically occur within minutes of exposure but in some cases pop up hours later, per the Mayo Clinic. They may include:

- Skin rashes, itchiness, or hives
- Swelling lips, tongue, or throat
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- A weak, pitter-pattering heartbeat
- Dizziness or fainting
- Stomach pain, cramps, vomiting, or diarrhea
- A sense of impending doom

If you experience these severe allergic reaction symptoms, give yourself an epinephrine shot and seek emergency medical care immediately.

## How to prevent an allergic reaction

The key to managing allergies is avoiding your triggers, Dr. Parikh says. But it can be difficult to completely stay away from some allergens like pollen, dust, and traces of food. So you may need to take preventative medications, keep injectable epinephrine on hand, and have an emergency plan ready in case of a severe reaction. Allergy shots, a form of immunotherapy to desensitize yourself to certain allergens, may also be helpful in controlling your allergies long-term, she says.



If you suspect you're dealing with symptoms of an allergic reaction, don't hesitate to reach out to an allergist. They can help you come up with a personalized treatment plan and arm you with tools to prevent allergic reactions in the future.

## II. Allergy Testing: Types, Risks, and Next Steps

An allergy test is an exam performed by a trained allergy specialist to determine whether your body has an allergic reaction to a known substance. The exam can be in the form of a blood or skin test (prick/patch).



Your immune system is your body's natural defense. Allergies occur when your immune system overreacts to something in your environment. For example, pollen, which is normally harmless, can cause the immune system to overreact. This overreaction can lead to:

- a runny nose
- sneezing
- blocked sinuses
- itchy, watery eyes
- coughing or wheezing



Confused about which skin care ingredients live up to the hype? You're not alone. Find out which products are worth using or worth skipping.

## Types of allergens

Allergens are substances that can cause an allergic reaction. There are three primary types of allergens:

- **Inhaled allergens** affect the body when they come in contact with the lungs or membranes of the nostrils or throat. Pollen is the most common inhaled allergen.
- **Ingested allergens** are present in certain foods, such as peanuts, soy, and seafood.
- **Contact allergens** must come in contact with the skin to produce a reaction. An example of a reaction from a contact allergen is the rash and itching caused by poison ivy.

Allergy tests involve exposing you to a very small amount of a particular allergen and recording the reaction.

## Why allergy testing is performed

Allergies affect more than 50 million people living in the United States, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (ACAAI). Inhaled allergens are by far the most common type.

The World Allergy Organization estimates that asthma is responsible for 250,000 deaths annually. These deaths can be avoided with proper allergy care, as asthma is considered an allergic disease process.

Allergy testing can determine which particular pollens, molds, or other substances you're allergic to. You may need medication to treat your allergies. Alternatively, you can try to avoid your allergy triggers.

## How to prepare for allergy testing

Before your allergy test, your doctor will ask you about your lifestyle, family history, and more.

They'll most likely tell you to stop taking the following medications before your allergy test because they can affect the test results:

- prescription and over-the-counter antihistamines



- certain heartburn treatment medications, such as famotidine (Pepcid)
- benzodiazepines, such as diazepam (Valium) or lorazepam (Ativan)
- tricyclic antidepressants, such as amitriptyline (Elavil)
- systemic corticosteroids (if you are undergoing patch testing)

## How allergy testing is performed

An allergy test may involve either a skin test or a blood test.

### Skin tests

Skin tests are used to identify numerous potential allergens. This includes airborne, food-related, and contact allergens. The three types of skin tests are scratch, intradermal, and patch tests.

Your doctor will typically try a scratch test first. During this test, an allergen is placed in liquid, then that liquid is placed on a section of your skin with a special tool that lightly punctures the allergen into your skin's surface.



You'll be closely monitored to see how your skin reacts to the foreign substance. If there's localized redness, swelling, elevation, or itchiness of the skin over the test site, you're allergic to that specific allergen.

If the scratch test is inconclusive, your doctor may order an intradermal skin test. This test requires injecting a tiny amount of allergen into the dermis layer of your skin. Again, your doctor will monitor your reaction.

Another form of skin test is the patch test (T.R.U.E. TEST [Trusted Source](#)). This involves using adhesive patches loaded with suspected allergens and placing these patches on your skin. Patch testing is performed to evaluate for cases of allergic contact dermatitis.

The patches will remain on your body after you leave your doctor's office. The patches are then reviewed at 48 hours after application and again at 72 to 96 hours after application.

## Blood tests

If there's a chance you'll have a severe allergic reaction to a skin test or cannot perform a skin test, your doctor may order a blood test.

For this test, a blood sample is tested in a laboratory for the presence of antibodies that fight specific allergens. Called ImmunoCAP, this test is very successful in detecting IgE antibodies to major allergens.

## What happens if I have an allergy?

If you discover you have an allergy, there are several ways to proceed. If it's an allergy to a food, it may be as simple as removing that food from your diet.

Other allergies require treatment. In some cases, your doctor may prescribe medications like antihistamines or corticosteroids.

Another treatment option is immunotherapy, also known as allergy shots. During immunotherapy, you'll be given shots containing small amounts of the allergen so your body can slowly build up immunity. For people with life threatening allergies, your doctor may prescribe emergency epinephrine.

There are also a number of home remedies that may help prevent or reduce symptoms of allergies. These include air filters and saline nasal or sinus rinses.

## The risks of allergy testing

Allergy tests may result in mild itching, redness, and swelling of the skin. Sometimes, small bumps called wheals appear on the skin.

These symptoms often clear up within hours but may last for a few days. Mild topical steroid creams can alleviate these symptoms.

On rare occasions, allergy tests produce an immediate, severe allergic reaction that requires medical attention. That's why allergy tests should be conducted in a doctor's office that has adequate medications and equipment, including epinephrine to treat anaphylaxis, which is a potentially life threatening acute allergic reaction.

Call your doctor right away if you develop a severe reaction right after you leave the doctor's office.

## After allergy testing

Once your doctor has determined which allergens are causing your symptoms, you can work together to come up with a plan for avoiding and managing them.

### **III. Foods That Fight Allergies**

Feeling stuffed up from allergy symptoms? Try changing your diet to include foods that might help.

## Allergies, Diet and You



The best way to avoid the symptoms of food allergies is to steer clear of the allergens themselves. But you can also use dietary choices to your advantage, as research shows that eating a healthy diet full of fruits and vegetables can help with allergies, too. While most food allergies are caused by a handful of common foods, including milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, soy, wheat, and fish and shellfish, most people with allergies don't realize that eating a healthy diet, including certain specific foods, can help them manage their symptoms as well.

“An overall healthy diet is helpful for controlling all conditions, including allergies,” says Leonard Bielory, MD, chairman of the integrative medicine committee for the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (ACAAI) and a professor in the department of medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in Newark. Recently, research has suggested that certain foods can help fight allergies by controlling underlying inflammation, dilating air passages, and providing other relief effects. Anti-inflammatory foods include foods that contain healthy fats, such as olive oil and fish like tuna and mackerel that's rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Fruits and vegetables are also good sources of inflammation-fighting nutrients.

Read up on some other foods that may offer you some allergy relief.

## Probiotics



“Probiotics have been proven to provide both anti-inflammatory and anti-allergic effects, especially when given in pregnancy and breastfeeding,” says William Silvers, MD, an allergist in Englewood, Colo., and chairman of ACAAI’s sports medicine committee. In a recent study published in the *British Journal of Dermatology*, mothers who drank milk containing a probiotic supplement during and after pregnancy were able to cut the chances their babies would develop eczema, a condition related to other allergies, by nearly half.

## Sinus-Clearing Spices



Spicy foods and with a little kick can help kick out allergy symptoms. “Anise, fennel, horseradish, and hot mustard can all act as natural decongestants — they offer allergy relief by stimulating the mucosal cilia to help break up congestion,” says Janet Maccaro, PhD, CNC, a clinical nutrition consultant in Scottsdale, Ariz. Look for recipes with those ingredients or add them to your favorite standbys when you start feeling stuffy.

## Fruits Rich in Vitamin C



Blame itchiness, hives, and other discomfort you feel during an allergic response on histamine. Vitamin C can help you with that. “Vitamin C indirectly inhibits inflammatory cells from releasing histamine,” says Carolyn Dean, MD, ND, medical director of the Nutritional Magnesium Association. Studies have shown that high levels of vitamin C reduce histamine and help it break down faster, once it’s released, providing allergy symptom relief.

## Bioflavonoids



Some research shows that bioflavonoids can provide allergy relief by acting as mast-cell stabilizers, thus decreasing the number of cells reacting to an allergen, Bielory says. Mast cells are responsible for releasing histamine. One specific bioflavonoid, called quercetin, appears to be particularly powerful when it comes to fighting inflammation and providing allergy relief, Dr. Silvers adds. Good sources of quercetin for allergy relief include **apples**, onions, tea, and red wine, among others.

## Foods Rich in Vitamin E



"The gamma-tocopherol form of vitamin E seems to decrease allergy-related inflammation," Bielory says. In a study from Michigan State University, animals that were given high doses of gamma-tocopherol before breathing in heavily polluted air had less inflammation in their nasal passages than animals that weren't given the gamma-tocopherol, he says. The dose of this form of vitamin E in the study was extremely high — you would have to drink gallons of soybean oil a day to get the same allergy relief. But using soybean oil in place of other fattier oils certainly can't hurt.

## Fresh Fruits and Vegetables



One sure way to improve your diet is to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat, Silvers says. Their natural anti-inflammatory effects can help relieve allergies. An Italian study supports the theory. Researchers looked at the diets of more than 4,000 children over the course of 12 months and found that kids who ate lots of cooked vegetables, tomatoes, and citrus fruits were less likely to experience **wheezing**, shortness of breath, and other symptoms of allergic rhinitis.



Children who ate more bread and margarine, on the other hand, were more likely to wheeze.

## IV. House Cleaning Guide For Allergy Sufferers

Are you suffering from dust allergies like hay fever, cold, flu or asthma? Regular house cleaning can help you eliminate common household allergens, dust particles, germs, pollen and other invisible guests.

Dusting hard surfaces, vacuuming carpets and rugs, and killing mould can reduce many allergy triggers and help relieve your symptoms. Many people make silly mistakes and apply cleaning solvents directly on dust-laden surfaces. This can make your allergy worse.



Hiring cleaning professionals who can bring their experience and help you create a clean, dust-free, healthy indoor environment is always better. They can reduce indoor air pollution by dusting every nook and cranny.

It is good to book professionals for a detailed end of lease cleaning Sydney if you are preparing the rental property for the final inspection. They follow a proven method and use quality products to give you sparkling results at the best price.

If you or someone in your family is an allergy sufferer, minimise allergens and pollen by following the DIY house cleaning guide:

### 1. Regular Dusting Is Important

Clean your house regularly if you want to keep allergens at bay. In today's hectic schedule, it becomes difficult to manage time for deep cleaning and dusting chores. So, the best thing you can do is to set your daily routine and spend 20-30 minutes on quick cleaning.



You can remove accumulated dust and grime from hard surfaces to eliminate allergy triggers. You can deep clean your house once a week. This will make things super easy for you. Make sure you cover dust-laden areas such as tabletop, chair handles, window sills, light switches, walls, etc.

## 2. Use Microfiber Cloths

Removing dust can be challenging as it spreads in the air and settles on surfaces like sofa, carpets and rugs. So, it is important to use specialised tools to make your work easier.

Instead of using a feather duster, use a microfiber cloth because it is super absorbent and works wonders in eliminating dust particles, allergens, pollen and other debris from hard as well as soft surfaces.

You can buy microfiber cloths and use them multiple times because they are reusable and super affordable. The best part is that damp microfiber cloths won't spread the dust further and prevents you from potential allergy symptoms. This is one of the simple and easy cleaning tips for beginners that can help you maintain a clean abode.

## 3. Get Rid Of Clutter

Is your home packed with piles of clothes or boxes? This can accumulate dust particles, pests and other unwanted allergens. Get rid of clutter if you want to maintain a clean and hygienic indoor environment. You can do this room by room and achieve desired results.

Toss broken, empty and ripped items. Donating pre-loved household items, such as blankets, clothing, and electronics, to the local charity in Sydney is an excellent way to help disadvantaged people.

## 4. Vacuum Your Carpets Properly

First of all, purchase a vacuum machine that has a HEPA filter. It can help fetch tiny allergens and dust particles embedded deep inside the fibres of carpets, rugs and upholstery furniture. Make sure you vacuum your carpets once or twice a week.



Don't forget to remove carpet stains using safe and sound methods. Blotting with a damp cloth can help you get rid of stubborn stains. Use white vinegar and warm soapy water to get rid of tough stains like grease, spills, splatters and mould. It is a pet-safe cleaning product that can help you clean your home like a pro.

Make sure you hire professional end of lease cleaners in Sydney to spruce up your rental property. They will vacuum your carpets, rugs, blinds, and upholstery furniture.

### 5. Kill Mould From Your Bathroom

Do not forget to inspect your bathroom and remove mould and mildew from the tiles, floors, curtains and other damp and dark areas. Use hydrogen peroxide to scrub the surface. You can use a tool like a toothbrush or a scrubber to achieve desired outcomes.

### 6. Wash Bedsheets In Hot Water

The bedsheets may reside dust particles and dead skin cells that can trigger your asthma or other allergy symptoms. Make sure you soak your bed sheets in hot water. This will kill dust mites and other allergens without giving you a hint of stress. Clean the pillow covers and other bed linens in hot water thrice a month for germ-free results.

### 7. Clean The Driveways And Entryways

Sweep the entryway and driveway to keep the dust at bay. Also, encourage everyone to keep their shoes outside the house on a shoe rack. This won't bring spoil, dust and pollen inside your house.

### 8. Window Blinds And Curtains

Window treatments, blinds and curtains tend to collect small dust particles and allergens that can pollute the indoor air if not cleaned properly. If you want to keep allergens at bay, vacuum your blinds or wipe them using a microfiber cloth.

Wash your dirty curtains in hot water and kill germs and bacteria as well.



This is a complete house cleaning guide that will help you learn the best ways to spruce up the house for allergy sufferers. If you can reduce the accumulation of dust, allergens and pollen using safe and sound products.

If you are at the end of your tenancy, hire professional end of lease cleaning Sydney for a stress-free retrieval of your bond money.

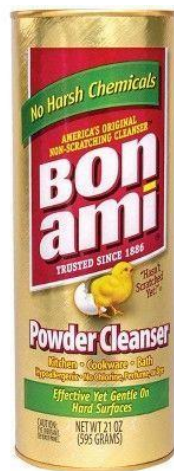
## V. 11 Best Eco-Friendly Cleaning Products for All Around Your House



As consumers have become more concerned about the ingredients found in regular cleaning products and opt to make their own homemade cleaners or purchase those with plant-based formulas, manufacturers have been hard at work finding new, effective yet sustainable alternative ingredients — meaning the performance of eco-responsible cleaning products is absolutely improving. You can expect eco-friendly cleaning supplies and tools to tout benefits like **biodegradable formulas, ingredients sourced from renewable plants instead of non-renewable**

petroleum, refillable containers, and packaging made from higher percentages of recycled plastic or no plastic at all.

We also verify any environmental claims the brand makes. **Keep in mind when you are shopping that the most responsible green cleaners clearly identify on the label what makes them green and exactly what environmental benefits they provide.** If a manufacturer isn't specific about what makes its product a smart environmental choice, we consider its claims to be greenwashing and won't recommend it. Based on in-lab and consumer at-home testing, these are the best eco-friendly cleaning products we recommend you buy to clean your home in 2021:



## Best eco-friendly heavy duty cleanser

### PROS

- Inexpensive
- Versatile
- Free of dyes, chlorine and fragrance

### CONS

- Doesn't kill viruses, bacteria or mold spores on contact

A tried and true favorite since it first came to market in 1886, **Bon Ami cleanser is made mostly of feldspar — a soft, mined mineral that gently polishes surfaces clean — limestone, and baking soda.** Bon Ami doesn't contain any dyes, chlorine or fragrance and cleans without scratching or damaging surfaces. It's a great basic cleanser for cookware and kitchen and bathroom fixtures. Make a paste with a little

water to gently clean scuffs from floors and walls. It even safely buffs away pesky rust and hard water stains.



## Best eco-friendly disinfecting spray cleaner

### PROS

- EPA-registered disinfectant
- Great value
- Comes in a 100% post-consumer recycled plastic bottle

### CONS

- Needs 10 minutes to disinfect surfaces

Seventh Generation multi-surface cleaners easily remove grease and grime from cooktops, counters and other household surfaces without streaking or extra wiping and rinsing. This version has the added benefit of being able to disinfect hard non-porous surfaces, too. Its active ingredient is Thymol, an essential oil from the thyme plant.



## Best eco-friendly disinfecting wipes

### PROS

- Fresh scent
- Disinfects with an essential oil

### CONS

- Takes 10 minutes to kill germs
- May dry out if stored too long

Disposable wipes may not be the most eco-responsible cleaning choice, but they can't be beat for convenience. And with all the cleaning we've been doing during the COVID-19 pandemic, they are the easiest way to kill germs on hard, non-porous surfaces, like countertops and faucet handles. These **wipes from CleanWell use a plant-based botanical ingredient, Thymol, to kill germs**. Thymol is the essential oil from the thyme plant. These wipes are EPA registered to kill bacteria and viruses on hard, non-porous surfaces in 10 minutes. After air drying, no rinsing or wiping is needed, even on food contact surfaces.



## Best eco-friendly bathroom cleaner

### PROS

- Cuts soap scum and hard water stains
- Kills bacteria and viruses

### CONS

- Comes in one scent
- Expensive

Citric acid is the key ingredient in this plant-based bathroom cleaner from **Method** that helps it obliterate tough soap scum and hard water stains. Plus, it kills 99.9% of bacteria and flu germs on hard, non-porous. It's safe to use it on all bathroom surfaces, including a shower head that's clogged with hard water minerals and vinyl shower curtain liners and plastic toilet seats. It has a crisp minty scent with notes of geranium.





## Best eco-friendly cleaning vinegar

### PROS

- Cuts grease and grime
- Comes in four scents
- More effective than regular white vinegar

### CONS

- Doesn't disinfect

Vinegar has been a pantry cleaning staple for years and is well known for its ability to cut grease and dissolve hard water stains. But it's no secret that vinegar has a pungent smell. **If you like the idea of cleaning with vinegar, but hate to odor it leaves behind, Aunt Fannie's is a great alternative.** It comes in four essential oil scents — Bright Lemon, Eucalyptus, Lavender, and Sweet Mandarin — plus it contains additional plant-based ingredients to give the vinegar extra cleaning oomph. Use it on grease-splattered oven glass, hard water build-up on fixtures and more.



## Best eco-friendly gentle cleanser

### PROS

- Gentle abrasive cleaner
- Absorbs odors
- Inexpensive
- Versatile

### CONS

What could be more eco-friendly than baking soda? Not only can you bake with it and brush your teeth with it, **but baking soda makes a great gentle abrasive cleaner.** Sprinkle it directly on your sink to remove scrapes and marks, inside cups and carafes to remove coffee and tea stains and on floor tiles to remove scuff marks.



## Best eco-friendly laundry detergent

### PROS

- USDA Certified Biobased Product 75%
- Translucent cap makes measuring easy
- EPA Safer Choice certified

### CONS

Tide purclean was a **top performer in GH Cleaning Lab stain removal tests and has earned our Good Housekeeping Seal**. It works in all water temperatures and contains 75% plant-based ingredients. In addition, this formula is free of dyes, chlorine, and optical brighteners and is produced at a zero waste to landfill manufacturing site using 100% renewable wind power electricity. It's available in honey lavender and unscented versions and we absolutely love the translucent cap that finally makes accurate measuring possible. Genius!



## Best eco-friendly dish liquid

### PROS

- Produces long-lasting suds
- USDA Certified Biobased Product 95%
- EPA Safer Choice certified

### CONS

A top performer in our GH Cleaning Lab tests of free and clear plant-based dish liquids and a winner in Sustainable Packaging Awards, **Seventh Generation washed more dishes than the competitors and had the longest lasting suds**. It is impressively made with 95% biobased ingredients. The formula is free of dyes and fragrances and EPA Safer Choice certified. The bottle is made entirely of recycled plastic and the flip-top cap is mostly made from recycled plastic clothes hangers.



## Best eco-friendly powdered dish soap

### PROS

- Produces a good amount of suds
- Also works as a powdered cleanser

### CONS

- More expensive than other dish soaps

Blueland's innovative formula comes in a recyclable paper pouch. All you do is pour the powder from the pouch into the sleek, refillable, stylish silicone shaker and set it beside your sink. Sprinkle the soap powder directly onto a sponge or brush if you only have a few items to clean or into a basin or bowl that you fill with water for a bigger load. We found its grease-cutting ability impressive and its suds substantial. Because it's a powder, this dish soap does double-duty as a gentle cleanser to clean your sink, cookware and more. Though it may seem pricey, a little goes a long way.



## Best eco-friendly dishwasher detergent

### PROS

- Very good cleaning performance
- No plastic packaging

### CONS

- More expensive than others
- Some tablets may come broken

Like its powdered dish soap, Blueland's dishwasher tablets are **shipped in a recyclable paper pouch that you pour into a reusable, sleek metal tin**. The solid, powdered tablets are easy to handle without mess and should any of the tablets arrive broken, extras are included to compensate. The compact tablet size mean they easily fit into any dishwasher's detergent dispenser. We saw very good cleaning results even in hard water. The oval metal tin takes up minimal space in an under sink cabinet and shields the detergent tablets from moisture.



## Best eco-friendly refillable cleaners

### PROS

- Cleans well without streaking
- Comes with one pouch of cleaner in the bottle
- Also available in granite, multi-surface, and tub and tile cleaners

### CONS

- Bottles are plastic, though reusable

### CONCLUSION

In many cases, your immune system fails to put up a good fight against seasonal allergies. In such situations, you have to take allergy medication to fight the infections.



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