



## Learn About Chemicals Around Your House

[Contact Us](#) | [Print Version](#) Search:  [GO](#)

[EPA Home](#) > [Pesticides](#) > [Kids](#) > [Learn About Chemicals Around Your House](#) > [Home Tour](#) > [Laundry Room](#) > Chlorine Bleach

Laundry Room

Front of House

### Chlorine Bleach:



#### What is it?

Did you know that a pesticide is added to your washing machine to help keep your white clothes white? This pesticide is also found in many household cleaning products that contain a "disinfectant" to kill germs. And it is found in household products used to clean mold and mildew from your shower or tub. Can you guess what this pesticide is? Chlorine Bleach!

You wouldn't think that ordinary chlorine bleach is a pesticide - but it is. Because it kills bacteria- and viruses it is called a disinfectant or an antimicrobial pesticide. And because it kills fungi and molds it is also

known as a fungicide.

If you are responsible for doing laundry or other types of cleaning as some of your chores around the house, you may be using liquid chlorine bleach to do the job. If so, you need to be sure to always "[Read the Label First](#)" to know how to properly use this product and for safety information. Also, be sure your parents know what household products you are using. They can make sure you use them safely.

#### What's in it?

Standard household bleach contains the chemical sodium hypochlorite.

#### What health and safety things do you need to think about with chlorine bleach?

Liquid bleach in the bottle is a 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution. That means

5.25% of the liquid is the chemical sodium hypochlorite and the rest is mostly water. The number 5.25% tells you how strong the concentration of a chemical is. Look at the labels of other household cleaning products that contain bleach in your home. Some contain sodium hypochlorite or chlorine bleach in concentrations of .7%, 1.8% and 2.4%.

**Never mix a chlorine bleach with any other household or cleaning products.** Doing so can result in different types of harmful acids being formed. Poisonous gasses can also be released that will cause very serious breathing problems.

Always be careful when using chlorine bleach. Because it comes in 1 gallon jugs the container can be a little hard to handle. Spills and splashes happen. Not only will the bleach damage your clothing but it is irritating to your skin and can cause serious damage to your eyes, even blindness. As with any chemical, your [exposure](#) to it is important to know.

**What do you do if you or someone you're with has an [accident](#) with household products?**

 [BACK 2 Laundry Room](#)

[EPA Home](#) | [Privacy and Security Notice](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Last updated on Wednesday, January 8th, 2003  
URL: <http://www.epa.gov/kidshometour/products/bleach.htm>