

Phosphate-free cleaning

Clean up your act!

Phosphates are compounds made up of phosphorus – a naturally occurring salt which is extracted as a mineral through mining deposits – hydrogen and oxygen. Phosphates are widely used in many laundry and dishwashing detergents.

Somewhat confusingly, although these compounds are entirely natural and are important nutrients for plants and animals, over-use causes a potentially toxic build up, with high concentrations in the water system resulting in serious disturbances to the eco-balance of lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Why? Because high levels of phosphates promotes algae overgrowth – this in turn depletes the amount of oxygen available for other aquatic life and is a big factor in water pollution. Phosphates (which are also added to some processed foods) are difficult to break down by regular water processes, so it's important that we all start being aware and avoiding them in the products we use.

FACT: The use of phosphates is heavily regulated or even banned in certain US states

FACT: The risk of phosphates has been known since the 1970s when Lake Ontario became severely polluted, devastating plants and wildlife

FACT: The word 'natural' does not signify an eco-friendly or certified product

How to avoid phosphates

- Buy products that are clearly labelled as phosphate-free.
- Be wary of terms such as 'natural' and 'biodegradable' on detergent packaging – neither necessarily means they are phosphate-free.
- Even a seemingly eco label which features the EU flower logo or Nordic Swan may not be entirely phosphate-free. Always check the label.
- Choose eco cleaning products - they tend to use plant based (some even organically grown for the purpose) foaming agents and water softeners.
- Make your own! Then you know exactly what you're using – see our Homemade Cleaners Factsheet for more information.

Useful websites

Example of phosphate free products – <https://www.ecover.com>

<https://methodproducts.co.uk/>

<https://biodegradable.biz/>

<https://delphiseco.com/>

Ecolabelled products containing low phosphates: Greenline Plus from <https://www.bunzl.com>



LET'S TALK: FOR HELP AND ADVICE CONTACT US

01738 632 162 / enquiries@green-tourism.com / green-tourism.com