

Mayo Clinic News Network

O11 Home Health Hazards

Intro: Every year Emergency Departments see injuries that change with the seasons. In summer people get hurt from fireworks, in winter people fall on the ice or get frostbite and in spring people show up with things like inhalation injuries and chemical burns. That’s thanks to spring-cleaning. Mayo Clinic has four main tips to remember that will help keep your spring-cleaning projects safe.

Video

Audio

TRT 3:05 Voice of Vivien Williams	Mayo Clinic doctor Clayton Cowl is an expert on occupational related injuries.
Clayton Cowl, M.D. Mayo Clinic Preventive Medicine	“A lot of people are thinking spring cleaning, but they’re not thinking safety in spring cleaning.”
Voice of Vivien Williams	He’s taking us on a tour of a typical home to see where possible hazards lurk. The four main ideas to safe cleaning are ventilation, proper storage, reading labels and proper disposal. We’ll start in the bathroom.
Clayton Cowl, MD. Mayo Clinic	“This is one of the no-no’s of cleaning out the bathroom. You never want to mix ammonia and bleach together.”
Voice of Vivien Williams	It creates fumes that can burn your throat, eyes, make you dizzy and exacerbate conditions like asthma.
Voice of Vivien Williams	And while your safely cleaning the tub, it’s a good idea to check for mold, as a little patch in a moist environment can spread.
Clayton Cowl, M.D. Mayo Clinic	“There’s some mold. Wash it off with a little diluted bleach.”
Voice of Vivien Williams	Now let’s head downstairs to the kitchen where there’s often lots of chemicals stored under the sink.
Clayton Cowl, M.D. Mayo Clinic	“If you have small children this is probably not the place you want to store cleaning agents. Oxalic acid, which can be quite caustic. This contains sodium hydroxide which is essentially lye.”

Voice of Vivien Williams Mayo Clinic News Network	It's poisonous and can cause chemical burns. Keep them safely out of reach. When it comes to batteries, make sure they're stored properly, away from heat, water and other liquids or anything combustible, and when they're dead throw them away appropriately. Now, on to the laundry room where there's a closet with lots of aerosols. "The question I have is how do you dispose of aerosols properly?"
Clayton Cowl, M.D.	"You don't want to take something and throw it in your regular garbage can. "
Voice of Vivien Williams	Most communities have hazardous material disposal site, which is important because aerosol cans can be dangerous.
Clayton Cowl, M.D. Mayo Clinic	"If its compressed under a lot of pressure, this can be a missile even with just a little bit of propellant left in the can."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Speaking of cans. Lots of folks spruce up by painting during spring-cleaning.
Clayton Cowl, M.D. Mayo Clinic	"In a poorly ventilated area, this can cause a lot of upper respiratory irritation, and ultimately if you were repeatedly exposed it could cause neurological issues."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Such as lightheadedness.
Clayton Cowl, M.D. Mayo Clinic	"The key is to have adequate ventilation, so even simple strategies such as using a plug -in fan."
Voice of Vivien Williams	That goes for both painting and cleaning. Now, garages are notorious places for cleaning no-no's such as improper storage. Make sure extra gas is in official gas cans, not old rusty metal ones, and make sure all types of containers are labeled properly.
Clayton Cowl, M.D.	"We don't really know what's in here."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Yikes. Be sure to store and label things clearly. And definitely read existing labels before you use any product.
Clayton Cowl, M.D.	"Its important to follow those label directions."
Voice of Vivien Williams	Using, storing and disposing of cleaning agents correctly will make for a safe season of spring-cleaning.
	For Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Vivien Williams.

Anchor tag:

Another good tip is to wear a paper mask if things are really dusty and wear a canister mask if you're painting with oil-based paint in a poorly ventilated area. If you're cleaning and you do get an inhalation issue, chemical burn, ingest a poison or suffer other injury, seek emergency medical care.

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