

Household Products

“Pet safe” does not necessarily mean “allergy safe.”

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Why look at household products?

Dogs have much more direct contact with floors and other household surfaces than we do. They walk barefoot, lie on floors and bedding, and then lick their paws and coat.

For a dog already experiencing itching, redness, paw licking or sensitive skin, residues left behind by household products may therefore be worth considering as potential environmental contact irritants.

Importantly, an irritant reaction is not necessarily the same as an allergy. We cannot determine that a cleaning product is causing a dog's allergies simply from its ingredient list. However, reducing unnecessary irritants can be a sensible part of an overall skin support plan.



Don't Rely on the Words “Pet-Friendly”

Marketing terms such as “pet-friendly”, “natural”, “eco”, “plant-based” and “suitable for pet households” do not necessarily mean that a product will be suitable for every sensitive dog.

“Pet safe” does not necessarily mean “allergy safe.”

These ingredients don't automatically make a correctly used product unsafe.

Concentration, dilution, exposure and whether residue remains on a surface all matter.



Lets talk about their ingredients

Some products marketed for homes with pets can still contain ingredients such as:

- Fragrance and perfume
- Essential oils and limonene
- Benzalkonium chloride (BAC)
- Other quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs/quats)
- Anionic, cationic and non-ionic surfactants
- Bleach/chlorine
- Ammonia
- Phenolic disinfectants
- Alcohols such as isopropyl alcohol
- Strong acids or alkaline ingredients



What Should I choose?

For dogs with particularly sensitive skin, I generally recommend keeping household products as simple as reasonably possible.

Where practical, look for products that are:

- ✓ Fragrance-free
- ✓ Free from added essential oils
- ✓ Clearly labelled with transparent ingredients
- ✓ Low residue when used correctly
- ✓ Suitable for use in homes with pets
- ✓ Used strictly according to the manufacturer's instructions



So fragranced-free it is?

Fragrance-free is particularly useful because it removes another unnecessary variable while we are trying to identify potential triggers.

However, remember that “fragrance-free” and “pet-friendly” doesn’t automatically mean irritation-free, so the way a product is used remains important. “Fragrance-free”, “natural”, “pet-friendly”, “sensitive” and “Allergy Friendly” all describe different things.

None of these terms alone means that a product is completely free from ingredients capable of causing irritation following inappropriate, concentrated or prolonged exposure.



Examples of some Fragrance Free brands that still need a closer look..

Some may still contain surfactants, preservatives, acids or other cleaning agents that could irritate particularly sensitive or already inflamed skin.

LOOK BEYOND THE BRAND AND CHECK THE INGREDIENTS

01

The Lab Co. Fragrance-Free - Their products still contain surfactants, phenoxyethanol, citric acid and propylene glycol despite being fragrance-free

02

Ecover ZERO - Their products are Fragrance-free, but contains alcohol, caprylyl/capryl glucoside, lactic acid and isopropyl alcohol.

03

Miniml Pure Fragrance Free -Fragrance-free, but contains alcohol, caprylyl/capryl glucoside, lactic acid and isopropyl alcohol.

04

Bio-D Fragrance-Free - A really interesting example because the “fragrance-free” formulation still lists limonene and orange oil.



05

Kit & Kin - Marketed as natural and pet-friendly; however, always check the individual product ingredients. Some products contain fragrance, essential-oil-derived ingredients, surfactants and citric acid, which may not be ideal when trying to minimise potential environmental irritants for a dog with sensitive or allergy-prone skin.

06

Smol- Pet-friendly, but check the product. Smol offers some fragrance-free options, but several of its pet-friendly household cleaners still contain perfume and fragrance allergens such as limonene, linalool and geraniol.

07

Delphis Eco- Benzisothiazolinone is present in some products, alongside added fragrances described as providing “long-lasting aromas.”

If a scent is designed to linger after cleaning, consider how much ongoing fragrance exposure this may create for a sensitive dog, particularly on floors and surfaces they are in close contact with.





So what would I personally recommend?

Fragrance-free + simple formulations + minimal residue + good ventilation are the key things to consider when choosing household products.

Finding something completely “chemical-free” can be really difficult, so instead, focus on reducing unnecessary ingredients and potential irritants wherever possible, particularly for dogs with sensitive or allergy-prone skin.



Laundry Products

Ecover's Zero Sensitive Non Bio Washing - POWDER

For bedding, blankets, washable covers and household laundry, I'd choose a fragrance-free, non-bio detergent. Ecover ZERO (Powder) contains no fragrance, citric acid, coloring or enzymes and is Allergy UK approved.

It still contains surfactants, though, so I would use the correct amount, avoid over-dosing and consider an extra rinse for dog bedding if you're deliberately trying to minimise residues.

**ECO
VER**



SENSITIVE WASHING POWDER
NON BIO LAUNDRY

ZERO%
FRAGRANCE AND ENZYME

25

FORMULATED TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF ALLERGIES



Cleaning Products

Koh Universal Cleaner Dew Fragrance-Free Superclean

Fragrance-free- Allergy UK certified and fragranced-free - It contains purified water and a small amount of potassium hydroxide, with no added fragrance, dyes or surfactants. However, it is highly alkaline (around pH 12.5), so the wet product could still irritate sensitive or already inflamed skin.

Bicarbonate of soda- can be a simple fragrance-free alternative for some household cleaning tasks. It contains no added fragrance, preservatives or surfactants and can be useful for light cleaning and deodorising. Mix with water where appropriate and always wipe or rinse surfaces thoroughly afterwards, ensuring no powdery residue is left where your dog walks, sleeps or eats.

IMPORTANT: plain bicarbonate + water over recipes combining bicarbonate with lemon juice, essential oils or fragranced washing-up liquid. Adding those ingredients rather defeats the purpose of simplifying potential environmental exposures.

Dew's hypochlorous-acid Disinfect products - Approx. 99.8% Electrolysed Water plus a tiny amount of salt and hypochlorous acid (a mild acid which is produced naturally by our body's immune system).

