

## Cleaning Confidential

By Tom McNulty

Can you say “methylchloroisothiazolinone?” Neither can I. But it’s one of the ingredients in a pet

**Clean Green** stain- and odor-remover product that, while probably very effective, may irritate eyes and skin. That’s why the label also says “keep out of reach of children.” For spring cleaning this year, many of us who live with dogs are looking for more earth-friendly, naturally derived products. Here are some tips and concoctions that will help reduce the chemicals in your home and keep it safer for your floor-sleeping pups.

> You can make basic, inexpensive solutions for treating carpet stains and odors with common household products like a water/white vinegar mix ( $\frac{2}{3}$  cup water to  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup vinegar), escalated if necessary to a water/mild detergent solution (1 cup water to  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon of a clear dishwashing detergent like Seventh Generation Natural Dish Liquid). Apply carefully to avoid soaking the carpet, and use clean white rags or white paper towels to blot.

> You’ll also find a multitude of commercial products to remove pet stains and odors from carpets and hard surfaces. To make sure you’re getting natural, chemical-free solutions, look for those made from



plant-based solvents such as soy, orange, cinnamon and lemon grass oil, grapefruit peel extract, and other biodegradable ingredients. Enzymes are also natural, and great for protein-based stains and odors. Other products in this eco-friendly category include Halo HolistiClean Super Stain and Odor Remover Dog Formula, Restore Enz-Away Spot Remover, Simple Solution PawSafe Household Cleaners and brands like Clean & Green, Nature’s Miracle, Crypton, PetZyme, Oxy Solution and Clorox Green Works.

> If you’re considering a product that’s not strictly natural, check label precautions carefully. Warnings and long, unpronounceable words are red flags, and good reasons to be particularly careful when using (and storing) them.

Bottom line: *read those labels*—even on products that call themselves “natural.” Look for plant-based biodegradable ingredients that are safe for people and pets. You want it all, and with a little diligence, you can have it—at least on the cleaning front.

Tom McNulty is the author of *Clean Like a Man*, which is full of guy-friendly housekeeping tips and tricks. Visit [cleanlikeaman.com](http://cleanlikeaman.com) for more.

