

Antibacterial soap: The antimicrobial chemical triclosan in antibacterial soaps is believed to disrupt thyroid function and hormone levels in people; when it mixes into wastewater, it can cause sex changes in aquatic life. And health experts believe that overuse of this and other antibacterial chemicals is promoting the growth of bacteria that are resistant to antibacterial treatment.

Better alternative: Good old-fashioned soap and warm water will kill just as many germs, studies have shown. If you must use a hand sanitizer, pick one that's alcohol-based and doesn't list triclosan or other chemicals on its label.

(This is an excerpt from an article in Today Health – "5 Toxic Chemicals You Should Banish From Your Home", written by Leah Zerbe and printed on 8/28/11.)