



DeAth shows off his nontoxic household disinfectant



Tech **Explorer**

A friendly germ killer

Like a lot of expectant couples, Sam DeAth and his wife worried whether their home in Hamilton, and all the household products in it, was safe for their soon-to-be-born son. So DeAth, a product developer whose mother has a line of botanical skin-care products, began thinking about a nontoxic household disinfectant. Four years later, he has come up with Benefect, a hospital-grade germ killer made with plant extracts—suitable for kitchen cutting boards, children's toys and toilets. Benefect is so safe that DeAth, 29, is happy to demonstrate by spraying it in his mouth—several times. Can consumers be convinced that a disinfectant less toxic than vinegar actually works? "We definitely are going to have a problem," says DeAth, "with

people thinking it's too good to be true."

Health Canada has approved Benefect, which retails for \$8.99 per 400-ml bottle, for household and industrial use. Independent testers say it kills the required 99.9999 per cent of bacteria. Environment Canada calls it "environmentally preferable." The strong-smelling spray damages Styrofoam, though, so it should not be used on picnic coolers. Deane Parkes, marketing chief at Acton, Ont.-based Purity Life Health Products Ltd., Canada's largest distributor of natural products, including Benefect, admits some environmentally friendly goods have only limited effectiveness. Not this one, he maintains. His pitch: "It's nontoxic, it works—which is a plus—and it can go head-to-head with Lysol."