

The Green Notebook

Healthy Home Checklist

Do you have a healthy home? Take a moment and check your house for common toxic chemicals and choose safer alternatives with this checklist provided by the Environmental Working Group. For more info, please visit ewg.org/healthy-home-tips/checklist.

KITCHEN

- Do you cook with non-stick cookware? Replace it or take care not to overheat it.
- Do you use plastic food containers? Replace with glass or at least never microwave food in plastic containers
- Do you filter your tap water? Check your local water quality (EWG has a database online) and then choose a filter if needed.
- Do you drink bottled water? Kick the habit.
- Any canned food in the pantry? Avoid it as much as possible as most cans are lined with BPA, a toxic chemical that leaches into the food.
- Do you eat conventionally grown produce? Try organic when you can (especially on produce with soft skins) or shop local farmer's markets. Check EWG's *Shopper's Guide to Pesticides* for more info.
- Do you eat high-mercury fish? Ask before eating and go for lower-mercury types.

BATHROOM

- Do you use air fresheners? Don't! Most contain a number of toxic chemicals.
- Is there fragrance in your personal care products? It's typically safer to choose all fragrance-free personal care products. Always check the ingredient lists.
- What kind of toothpaste do you use? Choose fluoride-free for kids under 2 and teach older kids to rinse and spit. Also, pick a paste without triclosan.
- Do you use liquid hand soap? Avoid anti-bacterials—the American Medical Assoc. recommends against using them at home.
- What material is in your shower curtain? Avoid vinyl. If you do get a new one, no matter what it is, leave it open outside for a few days to air out.
- Do you have extra products? Less is more. Skip the hair spray, detangler, body sprays, powders, etc...if you can. Less toxic and cheaper!

CLEANING

- Are your cleaners green? Choose green-certified when possible.
- Do your products label all ingredients? Most don't. Support companies that disclose all ingredients. Call the manufacturer if you have to.
- Do you need all those products? Most homes can be safely cleaned with a few non-toxic ingredients like vinegar, baking soda and water.

WHOLE-HOME

- Was your home built before 1978? If so, it may contain lead paint. Find out how to safely rehab.
- Got foam furniture? Foam products, like stuffed furniture and mattresses, are often treated with toxic fire retardants, so keep them well covered. Choose naturally fire resistant materials like cotton and wool when possible. Don't "protect" fabrics and carpets with sprayed on chemical coatings.

- ☑ Do you use pesticides and insecticides? Try non-toxic alternatives first. Go organic for health of planet and kids and pets.
- ☑ Do you have a wood deck, picnic table or playground set? Those made before 2005 likely contain arsenic. Replace or reduce exposure by sealing it.
- ☑ What materials are your kids' toys made from? Top contaminants are lead paint, play make-up, cadmium and lead in play jewelry and phthalates in soft plastics.

This is a lot of information. If you have further questions, either look online or go to the library and check out books on green or organic living. Unfortunately, with the advent of chemicals, which are helpful in some situations, life gets a little more complicated. Simplify by cleaning, eating and buying simply and looking to our grandparents and great grandparents for advice on how to live toxic-free. The new trends are back to the basics, less is more and live simply—which, coincidentally, will protect your wallet.

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