

Tips to Improve Indoor Air Quality and Be Safer Inside the Home

If you don't use a toxic chemical in the first place, then you don't have to contain it, clean it up, or be exposed to it—which is what preventing pollution is all about. Follow these tips to reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals and create a safer and healthier indoor living environment for you and your family.



- 1) Household Cleaners:** Look for labels that disclose all of the ingredients. Manufacturers with third-party, ecolabel certifications report all of their ingredients. You may also be able to find a list of ingredients on a product's web site. These certifications are rigorous and science based:

- Green Seal (www.greenseal.org)
- EcoLogo (www.ecologo.org)
- Safer Choice (<http://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>)



- 2) Integrated Pest Management:** Common pests can cause serious health problems. Pests such as cockroaches and rodents, as well as the chemicals we use to control them, can cause and trigger allergies and asthma by contaminating our air indoors. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a method that focuses on trying to avoid the pest in the first place. If a pest cannot be avoided, know about the species to prevent them from getting out of control. IPM is safer because non-chemical methods are the first line of defense. New York State Pest Management (<https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you>) has helpful tips. If chemicals must be used, always choose less hazardous products. Be sure to read warning labels before using any chemical products.
- 3) Vinyl Floor and Wall Coverings:** Flexible vinyl household products like flooring and wallpaper are manufactured using PVC that may have toxic chemical additives including phthalate plasticizers and lead. Traditional vinyl wallpaper leaks **VOCs**. The adhesives used in pre-pasted wallpaper emit vapors. The chemicals used in vinyl wallpaper have the potential to harbor mold.. UL Environment's GREENGUARD provides third party certification for floor and wall coverings. Go to www.greenguard.org to find better alternatives.

- 4) **Building Materials:** Plywood, oriented strand board, kitchen cabinets and home insulation are all products that can contain formaldehyde, a known human cancer-causing chemical. Choose solid woods or plywood instead of MDF. Building Green, www.buildinggreen.com, provides lists of less toxic building materials.
- 5) **Personal Care and Beauty Products:** Choose products that are fragrance free and reduce your use of nail polish and acetone nail polish remover. Read labels and avoid products that contain toluene, formaldehyde or phthalates. Look for nail polish labeled "3 free" or "5 free" and be sure to open your windows.



- 6) **Dry Cleaning:** Ask your dry cleaner if they offer professional wet cleaning rather than the commonly used solvent, perchloroethylene, a probable human carcinogen. Professional wet cleaning uses high tech equipment to wash, dry and finish clothing. Find more information at www.turi.org/drycleaning.

RESOURCES



www.ewg.org/skindeep

GoodGuide

www.goodguide.com



<https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice>



<https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you>

GREENGUARD
CERTIFICATION

www.greenguard.org



www.turi.org/drycleaning



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