

EWG Action Fund's Healthy Home Checklist

Check your house for common toxic chemicals and choose safer alternatives with this simple checklist for less toxic living. Online resources: ewg.org/healthy-home-tips/checklist

KITCHEN

- Do you cook with non-stick cookware?** Replace with cast-iron, stainless steel, or glass when possible. Stuck with it? Take care not to overheat it, which releases toxic fumes.
- Do you use plastic food containers?** We recommend glass over plastic. Never microwave food in plastic containers. For baby, use glass or BPA-free plastic bottles.
- Do you filter your tap water?** Check EWG's online tap water quality database for local contaminants, then choose a filter that removes them, if needed.
- Do you drink bottled water?** Kick the habit. For water on-the-go, get a reusable water bottle, like stainless steel (not plastic or aluminum lined with plastic).
- Any canned food in the pantry?** Cook with fresh or frozen whenever possible; most food cans (including liquid infant formula) are lined with bisphenol-A (BPA), a toxic chemical that leaches into the food.
- Do you eat conventionally grown produce?** Check EWG's *Shopper's Guide to Pesticides* to be sure you buy organic when pesticide residues are highest.
- Do you use iodized salt?** You should. Iodine is necessary to maintain healthy thyroid function.
- Do you eat high-mercury fish?** Ask before eating and head for the lower-mercury types (especially for pregnant women and young children).

BATHROOM

- Do you use air fresheners?** Don't! Most contain a number of toxic chemicals that contaminate the air you breathe.
- Is there fragrance in your personal care products?** We don't know what's in "fragrance," so it's safer to choose all fragrance-free personal-care products. Always check ingredient lists to be sure.
- What kind of toothpaste do you use?** Choose fluoride-free for kids under 2 and teach older kids to rinse and spit; fluoride is toxic if swallowed. Also, pick a paste without triclosan - you'll see it on the ingredient list.
- Do you use liquid hand soap?** If so, avoid anti-bacterials - the American Medical Association recommends against using them at home.
- What material is your shower curtain?** Avoid vinyl shower curtains. If you get a new curtain (whatever the material), leave it outside for several days before using.
- Do you have extra products?** Less is more. Skipping cosmetics like hair spray and detangler, body sprays and powder is less toxic - and cheaper!

LAUNDRY & CLEANING CLOSET

- Are your cleaners green?** It's hard to know without a full ingredient list, which most products don't have. Find out the ingredients by calling the manufacturer, avoid the toxic ones, and choose green-certified products whenever possible.
- Do your product labels list all ingredients?** Most don't, but they should. Support companies that disclose all ingredients by buying their products – you have a right to know.
- Do you need all those products?** Most homes can be safely cleaned with a few non-toxic ingredients: vinegar (it's anti-bacterial), baking soda, water, a HEPA vacuum, microfiber mops and cloths - and some elbow grease! Skip laundry products you don't need, like dryer sheets, fabric softener, and chlorine bleach.

ALL AROUND THE HOUSE

- Was your home built before 1978?** If so, it probably contains lead paint. When repainting, use a wet sanding technique to reduce dust, choose low VOC paints and always paint with the windows open for good ventilation. Keep kids away from rehab dust and loose chips.
- Got foam furniture?** Foam products (like stuffed furniture and mattresses) are often treated with toxic fire retardants, so keep them well-covered. Ask whether a product is treated before you buy and choose naturally fire-resistant materials like cotton and wool, when possible. Don't "protect" your fabrics and carpets with sprayed on chemical coatings – simply clean spills quickly.
- Do you use compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)?** They contain mercury and should be handled and disposed of with care. Use them where there's no danger of breaking near children; clean up broken bulbs quickly and safely.
- Do you use pesticides or insecticides?** Try non-toxic alternatives first; pesticides are a last resort. If you choose to use them, store them out of reach of children. Organic gardening is healthier for kids and pets, since they live closer to the ground.
- Do you have a wood deck, picnic table or playground set?** Those made before 2005 likely contain arsenic. Test to confirm and either replace with safer wood or reduce your exposure by sealing it, replacing high-use areas and washing hands after touching, especially before eating.
- What materials are your kids' toys made from?** Top contaminants to avoid are: lead paint, play make-up, cadmium and lead in play jewelry, and phthalates in soft plastics (like teething rings and rubber duckies). Choosing non-toxic toys for young kids is especially important because so many end up in their mouths.