



## EcoHealth and Your Home – A Quick Guide

### SNAPSHOT: Is your home making you feel ill?

| You might be feeling:   | You home might have:   | Possible Sources:  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye irritation<br><input type="checkbox"/> respiratory irritation<br><input type="checkbox"/> skin irritation<br><input type="checkbox"/> dizziness<br><input type="checkbox"/> throat irritation<br><input type="checkbox"/> congestion,<br><input type="checkbox"/> nausea<br><input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue<br><input type="checkbox"/> nose and eye irritation<br><input type="checkbox"/> drowsiness,<br><input type="checkbox"/> disorientation,<br><input type="checkbox"/> nerve problems,<br><input type="checkbox"/> gastrointestinal irritation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Headaches | Chip board, nail polish, air fresheners, chemical stabilizers, wood preservatives and coatings<br>Laundry detergent, perfume, fabric softener, paints, oven cleaner, floor polish/wax, household cleaner, synthetic cosmetics and creams, plastics with phenols, freshly dry-cleaned clothes, de-greasers, cleaning solutions, vinyl toys, vinyl shower curtains, new carpets, stain removers, lacquers, chemical bug spray, | Formaldehyde<br>Benzenes (benzol)<br>Dichlorobenzene<br>Diethylene glycol<br>Phthalates<br>PCBs<br>TCEs<br>Benzaldehyde<br>Ethyl acetate<br>Limonene<br>Phenols<br>Ethanols<br>Acetone,<br>VOCs<br>PVCs<br>Vinyl chloride<br>Toluene<br><br>Many of these chemicals are toxic to the immune system and are carcinogens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moody<br><input type="checkbox"/> neurological problems,<br><input type="checkbox"/> fatigue<br><input type="checkbox"/> respiratory problems  | Leaky basement or ceiling or walls, poorly ventilated bathroom   | Mold<br>(black mold growth, mold growth on houseplant soil)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> trouble sleeping,<br><input type="checkbox"/> burning ears and face<br><input type="checkbox"/> coughing, sneezing<br><input type="checkbox"/> congested   | Plush Carpets, old cushions and comforters, pets, plush toys, dirty air vents, open shelves  | Dust, dust mites, pet dander   |

It can be overwhelming and bit scary, but it's not hopeless! The main key to improving your health at home is to eliminate the use of problem-causing substances from your home.

This quick guide offers some basic tips and solutions on keeping your home a healthy oasis free of allergens and chemicals.

| <u><b>ROOMS</b></u> | <u><b>POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES</b></u>   | <u><b>SUGGESTIONS</b></u>   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| <b>Kitchen</b>      | <p><b>Plastic, Teflon or aluminum cookware, Tupperware</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-off-gas chemicals</li> <li>-toxic odours when heated</li> <li>-Bakelite handles are plastic</li> <li>-phenol and formaldehyde are emitted</li> <li>-some plastic ready-to-boil/microwave packages will leach BPA chemical when heated</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pyrex and Corning Ware</li> <li>-stainless steel</li> <li>-iron skillet</li> <li>-ceramic skillet</li> <li>- food store in glass</li> <li>-Corning Ware chopping block</li> <li>- cellophane bags</li> <li>-do not re-heat food in any plastic containers/ plastic baggies, use glass/ceramic</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Bathroom</b>     | <p><b>Any discoloration of black or white around the window, behind the toilet, on the tiles in the shower, on the ceiling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-mold could often be a problem because of the moist condition in the room. Black mold is especially problematic – it can cause respiratory problems, rashes and other health effects.</li> <li>-if you have peeling paint or wall paper or water droplets from windows or a musty smell in the room itself; mold is probably going to be a problem</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-it is important that the bathroom be vented properly</li> <li>-open the window after showering</li> <li>-dry the shower curtain after using it</li> <li>-be sure that towels etc. don't remain wet – set out to dry</li> <li>-dry the floor mat after using it</li> <li>-use exhaust fan to push moisture outside</li> <li>-Benzalkonium Chloride – 1:750 (Zephiran) either full strength or mix ½ with water to wipe around the areas to prevent mould build-up or get rid of mould (<b>Note: Zephiran should be used with caution and protection, but it is an alternative to using harsh bleach, or alcohol-based cleaners</b>)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Basement</b>     | <p><b>High Humidity, musty smell</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-ideal humidity level is between 30-50-% humidity –</li> <li>-musty smell can be an indication of mold growth</li> <li>-humidifiers can circulate mould or dust – purchase a hygrometer to measure the humidity levels</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-avoid moisture in the basement</li> <li>-if the home is dry, used filtered or distilled water in the humidifier</li> <li>-clean humidifier often with ½ water and ½ Zephiran solution</li> <li>-if the basement floods – everything that is damp or wet must be thrown out and professionally renovated</li> <li>-the basement must be totally dry and clear of mold</li> <li>-serious mold growth in the walls or floor will need professional clean up and restoration</li> </ul>   |

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| <b>Living Room</b> | <p><b>Spray air fresheners or stick deodorizers, plug- ins</b></p> <p>-spray air fresheners and sticks only cover up the odour; they do not get rid of it<br/>         -they are chemically based and cause breathing problems or other symptoms for many individuals<br/>         -volatile organic compounds, (VOC's) end up in the air and contaminate it</p>   | <p>-open the window – put on the vent<br/>         -remove the odour if possible<br/>         -if tolerated, try a few cloves or a cinnamon stick<br/>         -baking soda or Borax in dishes may help<br/>         -Zeolite in a dish may also help<br/>         -coffee grinds also help (if smell is tolerated)<br/>         -put a portable air purifier in if necessary<br/>         -if tolerated, use a few drops of natural essential oil (eucalyptus, lemon, etc) on a cotton ball or a diffuser</p>   |
| <b>Bedroom</b>     | <p><b>Tables or furniture made from particle board</b><br/> <b>Synthetic carpets that off-gas chemicals</b></p> <p>-can have formaldehyde and other chemicals in it that off-gas over time.<br/>         -synthetic carpets and carpet glues can cause health issues<br/>         -although you might get used to the smell and not notice it, you body is still being affected by the chemicals. You might get sore throat, cough, itchy eyes, headaches.</p> | <p>-you can paste kitchen foil on the back-side of furniture with particle board to seal off the scent<br/>         -you can purchase low-odour sealants that you can paint over exposed board to seal in the scent<br/>         -wash down and air-out furniture before placing it in the home<br/>         -furniture (and other items) can also be off-gassed by heat. You can heat the room the furniture is in to a higher temperature than normal, then turn off the heat and open the windows; repeat several times.<br/>         -furniture that needs off-gassing can also be placed in the outdoors in the sun on a hot day.<br/>         -use natural fibre carpets</p> |
| <b>Yard</b>        | <p><b>Use of bug sprays and pesticides</b></p> <p>- Use of DEET bug/insect spray in summer<br/>         -Use of products such as Raid to rid of insect populations – all pesticides are highly toxic and should never be used</p>  | <p>-burn citronella candles on patios to keep bugs away<br/>         -sprinkle food grade Diatomaceous earth around problem insect areas (such a carpenter ants, etc)</p>  |
| <b>Laundry</b>     | <p><b>Dust, lint, synthetic fibers</b><br/>         -can cause allergic reactions</p> <p><b>Toxic chemicals from commercial laundry products, fabric softener</b><br/>         -chemical scents in these products are designed to cling to fabric – often cause respiratory problems and headaches</p>   | <p>-clean your appliances regularly<br/>         -use non-toxic, unscented, environmentally friendly products<br/>         -Avoid conventional dry cleaning – use environmentally friendly cleaning systems – the “wet-clean” process<br/>         -Borax, baking soda, washing soda, some Shaklee and Amway, Nature Clean products may be tolerated</p>   |