

Your Guide to Healthy Indoor Air

Did you know that air pollution levels are often 2-5 times higher inside than they are outside? Most people spend 90% of their time indoors, so the quality of the air inside really matters for our health! This guide will help you make informed choices about the products you use in your home so you can keep your air fresh, clean, and healthy.



Fragrances

Air fresheners are designed to make our homes smell nice, but they actually make your air dirtier. They release an average of 18 chemicals into the air, which can irritate airways and trigger asthma. Most conventional candles are made of paraffin wax, which also releases harmful chemicals when burned.

Safer Choices: **Burn beeswax, soy, or coconut wax candles** instead of paraffin-based ones, or try an all-natural deodorizer with baking soda and dried herbs. Air out your home and use exhaust fans to help with bad smells.



Cleaning Products

Many store-bought cleaning supplies contain harmful chemicals and synthetic fragrances that can irritate respiratory systems and skin.

Safer Choices: **Switch to non-toxic cleaning products** or try making your own. For a list of healthier cleaning options, check out the Environmental Working Group's [Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#). Most importantly, **never mix cleaning products**, as this can create toxic gases and cause serious illness.

What to watch out for

Next time you're shopping for cleaning products, try to avoid these ingredients:

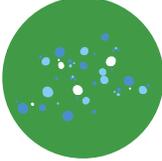
- Phosphates Quaternary Ammonia Compounds (QUACs)
- Formaldehyde
- Sulfates & Sulfuric Acid
- Bleach
- Pine oil (this can be irritating for kids with asthma)
- Citrus oil cleansers (these can be irritating for kids with asthma)



Learn more at
mothersandothersforcleanair.org



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Mold and Mildew

These fungi are common in damp or poorly ventilated areas. They can be toxic and contribute to serious respiratory problems and allergic reactions.

Safer Choices: **Control moisture** using dehumidifiers and proper ventilation to prevent mold. Use exhaust fans in bathrooms when showering, or open a window slightly to let steam out. Fix leaky pipes as soon as possible. If you notice mold or mildew growing, vinegar or hydrogen peroxide work best to remove the spores. Just be sure to use them separately - they shouldn't mix!



Cooking

Gas stoves burn fuel that releases harmful gases, such as nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide. What we're putting on the stove matters too. Teflon and other non-stick pans can release dangerous chemicals if they are overheated.

Safer Choices: **Ventilate your kitchen well** by opening a window or using exhaust fans. If you are able, switch to an electric cooktop. Use safer cookware like stainless steel, cast iron, or ceramic instead of non-stick pans.



Pesticides

Pesticides release harmful chemicals into the environment that can accumulate and eventually lead to chronic illnesses. Direct exposure can also cause acute symptoms like respiratory irritation, headaches, and dizziness.

Safer Choices: **Avoid chemical pesticides;** instead, use natural repellents and preventative methods like sealing cracks and maintaining cleanliness. If needed, pheromone traps and Borax are safer alternatives to chemical sprays. Just be sure to use caution when placing Borax and keep it out of kids' reach.

More clean air tips

There are lots of ways you can improve the quality of the air in your home. For more tips on keeping your home clean, healthy, and safe, check out our full Healthy Indoor Breathing Toolkit at the QR code below.

