

Non-Toxic Home

Checklist

Your room-by-room guide to reducing toxins, one simple swap at a time.

Small, doable, sustainable.

▪ *Bedroom*

▪ *Kitchen*

▪ *Bathroom*

▪ *Laundry & Cleaning*

How to use this checklist

Don't do it all at once. Work room by room, week by week. Progress beats perfection every single time.

Replace, don't discard. When something runs out, choose a better version. No dramatic purges required.

Prioritize by contact. Things that touch your skin, food, or air all day matter more than things sitting in a drawer.

Celebrate small wins. Swapping one pan, one lotion, one spray — that's real. That counts. Keep going.

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■ **BEDROOM**

You spend 8 hours a night here. Make those hours count.

■ **BEDDING**

Wash new bedding before first use

- 1 **Why:** Manufacturing finishes, dyes and optical brighteners sit on new fabric. A hot wash gets rid of most of them before they touch your skin all night.

Switch to 100% cotton, linen or wool pillowcases

- 2 **Why:** Synthetic blends can contain polyester treated with antimicrobial chemicals. Natural fibers breathe better and carry fewer additives.

Choose a mattress protector made of organic cotton or wool

- 3 **Why:** Conventional protectors are often waterproofed with PFAS coatings — the same 'forever chemicals' found in non-stick pans.

Air out your duvet or comforter weekly

- 4 **Why:** Dust mites thrive in warm, enclosed spaces. UV light and fresh air kill them naturally — no spray required.

Replace foam pillows with natural fill (latex, wool, buckwheat)

- 5 **Why:** Foam pillows off-gas VOCs, especially when new. Natural fills are more breathable and free of chemical treatments.

Wash bedding in hot water (60°C/140°F) every 1–2 weeks

- 6 **Why:** This temperature kills dust mites without needing chemical treatments — simple and highly effective.

Skip the fabric softener on sheets

- 7 **Why:** Fabric softener coats fibers with fragrance chemicals and silicone compounds. Your skin absorbs these for 8 hours straight. Wool dryer balls do the same job.

Choose bedding labeled OEKO-TEX Standard 100

- 8 **Why:** This certification means the fabric has been tested for over 100 harmful substances. It's one of the most reliable textile certifications available.

Avoid wrinkle-resistant or 'easy care' sheets

- 9 **Why:** That wrinkle-free finish is usually formaldehyde resin. It degrades over time and can irritate skin and airways.

Store extra bedding in breathable cotton bags, not plastic

- 10 **Why:** Plastic storage traps humidity and off-gases chemicals onto your bedding. Cotton lets it breathe and stay fresh.

▪ AIR QUALITY

- 1** *Open your bedroom window for 10 minutes every morning*
Why: Even in winter. Overnight CO2 and VOC levels build up in a closed room — a quick air exchange resets the whole space.
- 2** *Place a snake plant or peace lily near the bed*
Why: These are among the few plants that release oxygen at night rather than CO2, making them ideal bedroom companions.
- 3** *Ban synthetic air fresheners and plug-ins from the bedroom*
Why: They release phthalates and VOCs continuously. If you want scent, a few drops of lavender essential oil on a cotton pad works beautifully.
- 4** *Vacuum your mattress every 3 months with a HEPA filter vacuum*
Why: Dust, skin cells and dust mite droppings accumulate fast. A HEPA filter traps particles instead of blowing them back into the air.
- 5** *Dust with a damp microfiber cloth, not a dry duster*
Why: Dry dusters just move toxin-laden particles into the air. Damp microfiber traps them.
- 6** *Keep shoes out of the bedroom*
Why: Shoes track in pesticides, heavy metals and outdoor pollutants. Leaving them at the door is one of the highest-impact habits in the book.
- 7** *Choose non-toxic paint if you repaint — look for zero-VOC labels*
Why: Standard paint off-gasses VOCs for months after application, most intensely in the first weeks. Zero-VOC options are widely available now.
- 8** *Avoid scented candles in the bedroom at night*
Why: Paraffin candles release toluene and benzene when burned. If you love candles, switch to beeswax or soy with cotton wicks.
- 9** *Consider a HEPA air purifier for your nightstand*
Why: Particularly useful if you live in a city or near a busy road. Running it while you sleep is when it does the most work.
- 10** *Wipe down window sills and blinds monthly*
Why: Blinds and sills collect dust that contains flame retardants shed from furniture and electronics. Out of sight shouldn't mean out of mind.

■ **KITCHEN**

Food is medicine — so let's not cook it in a chemical cocktail.

■ **COOKING SUPPLIES**

Replace scratched or peeling non-stick pans immediately

- 1 **Why:** Damaged PTFE (Teflon) coating flakes into your food. This is non-negotiable. Replace with stainless steel, cast iron or ceramic-coated cookware.

Never preheat an empty non-stick pan on high heat

- 2 **Why:** PTFE coating starts breaking down around 260°C/500°F, releasing fumes that are toxic to birds and irritating to humans. Always add oil or food first.

Switch to cast iron for everyday frying

- 3 **Why:** Cast iron is essentially forever cookware — no coating to degrade, naturally non-stick when seasoned, and it adds a small amount of iron to your food.

Use wooden, silicone or stainless utensils — not plastic

- 4 **Why:** Plastic utensils scratch cookware and can melt slightly at high temperatures, leaching microplastics into your food.

Store food away from direct contact with plastic wrap

- 5 **Why:** Use beeswax wraps, glass lids or a plate on top of a bowl. PVC plastic wrap can transfer plasticizers to fatty foods especially.

Filter your tap water for cooking and drinking

- 6 **Why:** A basic carbon filter pitcher removes chlorine, lead and many VOCs. You don't need a full under-sink system to make a meaningful difference.

Replace plastic cutting boards with wood or bamboo

- 7 **Why:** Plastic boards develop grooves over time that harbor bacteria and shed microplastics. Wood is naturally antimicrobial and doesn't shed.

Avoid aluminum foil in direct contact with acidic foods

- 8 **Why:** Tomatoes, citrus and vinegar cause aluminum to leach from foil. Use parchment paper as a barrier when roasting acidic foods.

Ventilate while cooking — turn on the range hood or open a window

- 9 **Why:** Cooking generates particulate matter, NO₂ (from gas stoves) and grease vapors. Good ventilation is the simplest air quality upgrade in the kitchen.

Choose stainless steel or glass kettles over plastic

- 10 **Why:** Plastic kettles leach microplastics and BPA into hot water — the worst condition for plastic leaching. Glass and stainless are an easy swap.

■ FOOD STORAGE

- 1** *Replace plastic containers used for hot food with glass first*
Why: Heat dramatically accelerates leaching from plastic. Glass containers are the highest-impact swap — start here before anything else.
- 2** *Never microwave food in plastic containers*
Why: Even 'microwave-safe' means the plastic won't melt — not that it won't leach. Transfer to a ceramic plate or glass bowl every time.
- 3** *Choose glass or stainless steel water bottles*
Why: Reusable plastic bottles, especially when worn or exposed to heat (car, dishwasher), leach BPA and BPS even when labeled BPA-free.
- 4** *Store acidic foods (tomato, citrus, vinegar) in glass or ceramic only*
Why: Acidity accelerates leaching from plastic and even some metal containers. Glass and ceramic are completely inert.
- 5** *Avoid canned foods lined with BPA — choose BPA-free or glass jars*
Why: Most conventional tin cans are lined with BPA resin. Brands now offer BPA-free alternatives, and jarred versions of many foods are widely available.
- 6** *Don't store cooking oils in plastic bottles long-term*
Why: Oils are fat-soluble, and fat accelerates plastic leaching. Transfer bulk oils to a glass bottle for everyday use on the counter.
- 7** *Label and rotate stored food — reduce the need for preservatives*
Why: Fresh, properly stored food is inherently lower-tox. Good rotation habits reduce the amount of heavily preserved processed food you reach for.
- 8** *Use silicone zip bags instead of single-use plastic bags*
Why: Food-grade silicone is stable and doesn't leach. Reusable silicone bags are now widely available and hold up well in the freezer.
- 9** *Rinse canned goods before use*
Why: This reduces sodium and removes any residual can-lining contact from the liquid, especially for high-acid canned tomatoes.
- 10** *Skip the plastic produce bags at the grocery store*
Why: Use reusable mesh bags or just set produce loose in your cart. Produce doesn't need to live in plastic from store to fridge to trash.

■ BATHROOM

Your skin is your largest organ. What goes on it goes in it.

■ PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Audit products that stay on skin longest — body lotion, deodorant, sunscreen

- 1 **Why:** Leave-on products have the highest absorption potential. Prioritize cleaner swaps here before rinse-off products like shampoo.

Ditch products listing 'fragrance' or 'parfum' as an ingredient

- 2 **Why:** These are catch-all terms hiding dozens of undisclosed chemicals including phthalates. Choose products scented with named essential oils instead.

Switch to a paraben-free moisturizer

- 3 **Why:** Parabens are endocrine disruptors found in most conventional lotions. Clean alternatives are widely available at every price point now.

Choose an aluminum-free deodorant

- 4 **Why:** Conventional antiperspirants use aluminum salts to block sweat ducts. Applied daily to a lymph-node-rich area, this adds up over time.

Use EWG's Skin Deep database before buying new products

- 5 **Why:** Scan or search any product at ewg.org/skindeep to see a hazard rating and full ingredient breakdown. Knowledge is power, literally.

Replace plastic toothbrushes with bamboo

- 6 **Why:** Over 4 billion plastic toothbrushes are discarded globally every year — and they don't biodegrade. Bamboo handles are compostable.

Choose fluoride toothpaste without artificial dyes or SLS

- 7 **Why:** SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate) is a foaming agent linked to mouth ulcers in sensitive people. Many clean toothpastes maintain fluoride without it.

Check your makeup's ingredient list for talc and heavy metals

- 8 **Why:** Some talc deposits contain asbestos naturally. Look for cosmetics tested for heavy metals, especially eyeshadows and blush used near the eyes.

Store products away from direct shower steam

- 9 **Why:** Heat and humidity degrade preservatives in personal care products faster, causing them to need more preservatives to compensate. A cool dry shelf extends product life naturally.

Minimize the number of products you use daily

- 10 **Why:** Every product is a new set of ingredients. A simpler routine with fewer, cleaner products is more effective than a 10-step routine full of unknowns.

■ ROUTINES

- 1** *Wash your face with lukewarm water — not hot*
Why: Hot water strips the skin barrier, forcing you to use more product to compensate. Lukewarm is gentler, and your face will thank you.
- 2** *Use a clean towel or reusable bamboo cotton pads to remove makeup*
Why: Disposable face wipes are loaded with preservatives and generate serious waste. Washable alternatives are gentler on skin and the planet.
- 3** *Apply products in order: lightest to heaviest*
Why: This isn't just a beauty tip — it ensures active ingredients absorb into skin rather than sitting on top of a heavy cream. Fewer wasted products, better results.
- 4** *Give natural deodorant a 4-week adjustment period*
Why: Your body needs time to recalibrate when you stop blocking sweat glands. Most people give up before the process completes — don't be one of them.
- 5** *Clean your makeup brushes weekly with castile soap*
Why: Dirty brushes harbor bacteria and old product residue. Castile soap cleans them thoroughly without synthetic detergent residue.
- 6** *Replace your loofah with a natural sea sponge or silicone brush*
Why: Plastic loofahs shed microfibers and harbor bacteria. Natural sea sponges are antimicrobial and biodegradable.
- 7** *Let hair air dry before bed when possible*
Why: Sleeping on wet hair in a closed room raises humidity, encouraging mold growth in bedding and mattresses. A simple habit with cascading benefits.
- 8** *Oil cleanse once a week instead of a harsh exfoliant*
Why: Harsh physical exfoliants (walnut shell, apricot kernel) cause micro-tears. A warm oil cleanse dissolves buildup gently with zero abrasion.
- 9** *Take shorter, cooler showers (under 10 minutes)*
Why: Long hot showers increase VOC exposure from chlorinated water — heat releases chlorine gas from the water. Shorter, cooler showers reduce this meaningfully.
- 10** *Keep a small plant in the bathroom for humidity and air freshness*
Why: Ferns, orchids and aloe thrive in bathroom humidity. They absorb VOCs from personal care product use and look beautiful doing it.

■ LAUNDRY & CLEANING

The cleanest home isn't the one with the strongest products. It's the one with the smartest ones.

■ LAUNDRY PRODUCTS

Switch to a fragrance-free laundry detergent

- 1 **Why:** Fragrance chemicals bind to fabric fibers and stay in contact with your skin all day. Fragrance-free doesn't mean it won't clean well — it means it's not adding anything extra.

Use wool dryer balls instead of dryer sheets

- 2 **Why:** Dryer sheets coat your clothes with fragrance and softening chemicals that transfer to your skin. Wool balls reduce drying time by 25% and work just as well.

Wash new clothes before wearing

- 3 **Why:** New clothing is treated with formaldehyde-based wrinkle-resist finishes, dyes and shipping chemicals. Always wash before the first wear.

Choose plant-based, enzyme detergents over conventional

- 4 **Why:** Enzyme detergents (look for: protease, amylase on the label) break down stains biologically and rinse fully clean — no residue left on fabric.

Wash synthetic fabrics (polyester, nylon) in a microfiber-catching bag

- 5 **Why:** Every wash cycle releases hundreds of thousands of microfibers from synthetic fabrics into waterways. A microfiber-catching bag catches them before they escape.

Use white vinegar as a fabric softener (½ cup in the rinse cycle)

- 6 **Why:** Vinegar neutralizes detergent residue, softens fabric naturally and leaves no scent once dry. Your grandmother's trick is still the best one.

Wash at 30°C for most loads — save hot water for bedding and towels

- 7 **Why:** Lower temperatures are gentler on fabric and significantly reduce energy use. Reserve hot washes for the items that actually need bacteria killed.

Choose oxygen bleach (sodium percarbonate) over chlorine bleach

- 8 **Why:** Chlorine bleach creates toxic byproducts when it mixes with other cleaners or organic matter. Oxygen bleach whitens effectively without the hazard.

Air dry when possible — especially wool, linen and cotton

- 9 **Why:** The dryer degrades fabric faster and reduces the lifespan of your clothes. Line drying extends them significantly — and UV light is a natural disinfectant.

Store detergent in a cool, dry place — not on top of the machine

- 10 **Why:** Vibration and heat from the machine can degrade detergent quality faster. A cupboard shelf keeps it more stable and out of reach of children.

■ **CLEANING PRODUCTS**

1 *Make a basic all-purpose spray: white vinegar + water + castile soap*

Why: This combination handles 80% of household cleaning tasks. Vinegar cuts grease and kills bacteria; castile soap lifts grime. Cost: pennies per bottle.

2 *Ditch products labeled 'antibacterial' for everyday use*

Why: Triclosan and other antibacterial agents are linked to hormone disruption and contribute to antibiotic resistance. Regular soap and friction work just as well.

3 *Never mix bleach with vinegar, ammonia or hydrogen peroxide*

Why: These combinations create toxic chlorine gas or peracetic acid. Even 'natural' cleaners can be dangerous when combined. Make one cleaner at a time.

4 *Use baking soda as a gentle scrub for sinks and tubs*

Why: Baking soda is mildly abrasive enough to remove soap scum and stains without scratching surfaces. Add a few drops of tea tree oil for antimicrobial action.

5 *Replace paper towels with washable microfiber or cotton cloths*

Why: Microfiber cloths clean surfaces with water alone — no product needed — because the fibers are fine enough to trap bacteria mechanically.

6 *Clean with a HEPA vacuum instead of sweeping indoors*

Why: Sweeping stirs up dust that settles back down. A HEPA vacuum traps particles including dust mite debris, pet dander and chemical residue from floors.

7 *Choose 'fragrance-free' or 'naturally scented' cleaning products*

Why: Cleaning products are used in enclosed spaces — kitchens, bathrooms — where VOCs from synthetic fragrances concentrate quickly. Your lungs are doing the absorbing.

8 *Ventilate every room you clean — open a window before you start*

Why: Even low-tox cleaners should be used in ventilated spaces. It's a habit that makes any product safer and clears the air of loosened dust.

9 *Replace plug-in air fresheners with a diffuser + essential oils*

Why: Plug-ins release synthetic fragrance chemicals 24/7 into a closed space. An intermittent diffuser with essential oils gives you scent on your terms.

10 *Do a product inventory once a year — declutter what you don't need*

Why: Most households have many more products than what they actually need. Fewer products = less chemical storage, less confusion, less waste.

You've got this.

Every box you check is a gift to yourself and your family.

Small, doable, sustainable.

Share this checklist with a friend who'd love it. Save it. Print it. Stick to it.

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