Indoor Air Quality Checklist

A room-by-room guide to breathing easier at home

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ANNUAL / ONE-TIME

- [ ] **Test your home for radon**
  Lowest floor first; retest every 2 years or after any major renovation
- [ ] **Install CO detectors on every floor**
  Place within 10 ft of every sleeping area; replace units every 5–7 years
- [ ] **Check CO detector & smoke alarm expiry dates**
  Replace any unit past its rated lifespan — they lose accuracy over time
- [ ] **Annual furnace, chimney & gas appliance inspection**
  Professional check; confirm flues are clear and flames burn blue, not yellow
- [ ] **Check for visible mold in high-risk areas**
  Bathrooms, basements, under sinks, and around windows — inspect thoroughly
- [ ] **Identify pressed-wood furniture off-gassing formaldehyde**
  Ventilate newer pieces; seal exposed edges with a low-VOC finish if possible
- [ ] **Assess painted surfaces if home was built before 1980**
  Do not sand or scrape without lead testing; hire lead-safe certified contractors
- [ ] **Test water for lead if home was built before 1990**
  Older plumbing may leach lead; use certified test kits or a professional lab

MONTHLY

- [ ] **Check bathroom caulk & grout for mold**
  Clean or recaulk if mold returns — recurring mold signals moisture behind the surface
- [ ] **Empty & clean dehumidifier collection trays**
  Stagnant water breeds mold and bacteria; keep indoor humidity between 30–50%
- [ ] **Clean or replace range hood grease filters**
  Buildup reduces effectiveness; confirm venting exhausts outside, not recirculating
- [ ] **Inspect under all sinks for moisture or slow leaks**
  Kitchen, bathroom, laundry — early detection prevents hidden mold growth
- [ ] **Check basement / crawl space for water intrusion**
  Inspect after heavy rain; look for wet walls, damp floors, or a musty smell

WEEKLY

- [ ] **Wash bedding on a hot cycle (130°F / 54°C)**
  Hot water kills dust mites; use allergen-protective covers on mattresses and pillows
- [ ] **Vacuum all carpets & rugs with a HEPA filter vacuum**
  Include under beds; damp-mop or wipe hard floors after to capture remaining dust
- [ ] **Open windows for 15–30 minutes for fresh air exchange**
  Check outdoor air quality first — skip on high-pollen or wildfire smoke days
- [ ] **Dust surfaces with a damp cloth, not dry**
  Dry dusting redistributes particles into the air rather than removing them
- [ ] **Run exhaust fans in bathrooms & kitchen during use**
  Confirm fans vent outdoors — recirculating hoods do not remove moisture or gases

DAILY HABITS

- [ ] **Use the range hood every single time you cook**
  Run during cooking and 10 min after; significantly reduces PM2.5 and NO2 from gas
- [ ] **Remove shoes at the door**
  Shoes track in pesticides, lead dust, pollen, and outdoor fine particles
- [ ] **Avoid synthetic fragrances in enclosed spaces**
  Air fresheners, plug-ins & scented candles are chronic low-level VOC sources
- [ ] **Do not idle vehicles in or near an attached garage**
  Carbon monoxide enters the home rapidly — even with the garage door partially open
- [ ] **Wash hands before meals, especially for children**
  Reduces ingestion of dust-bound toxins including lead and pesticide residues

YOUR MONITORING TOOLKIT

- [ ] **Radon test kit — essential, start here**
  Passive charcoal canister; lowest level of home; mitigate if result is 4 pCi/L or above
- [ ] **CO detector — one per floor, near sleeping areas**
  Single most important safety device for combustion air quality — non-negotiable
- [ ] **Hygrometer (humidity monitor)**
  Inexpensive digital model; keep 30–50% RH to inhibit mold growth and dust mites
- [ ] **Air quality monitor with PM2.5 reading**
  Shows real-time particle levels; reveals what cooking and burning events do to your air
- [ ] **VOC sensor**
  Detects spikes after painting, new flooring, or new furniture; some monitors include this
- [ ] **Lead test swabs (homes built before 1980)**
  Apply to painted surfaces before any sanding or renovation work
- [ ] **Mold test kit (if hidden mold is suspected)**
  Useful when you smell mold but cannot locate it; professional testing is more reliable

WHEN SOMETHING IS WRONG

IF YOU FIND…	→	TAKE THIS ACTION
Radon at or above 4 pCi/L	→	Contact a certified radon mitigation contractor; retest after remediation to confirm
CO detector alarm sounds	→	Evacuate everyone immediately — people and pets; call emergency services; do not re-enter
Persistently high indoor PM2.5	→	Identify the source: combustion appliances, outdoor smoke, or continuous off-gassing
Humidity consistently above 60%	→	Find the moisture source — water intrusion or poor ventilation — address the root cause
Symptoms improve when you leave home	→	Log when symptoms occur; share the pattern with your doctor — it is a meaningful signal