

# Household Toxins Might be Making you Sick

Common household toxins may be making you sick. In some cases you don't even know you are sick. Toxins are present in your home in the form of cleaning products, paints, furniture, synthetic building materials such as particle board and insulation, carpets, and even your printer and photocopier! Learn about the common culprits and just what they can do to your health.

## VOCs are Household Toxins

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are harmful gases released by all of the common household items listed above. These gases cause lethargy, skin rashes, headaches, drowsiness, itchy eyes, asthma-like symptoms, and even cancer.

Be aware of what you are bringing into your home! I was reminded of this a few weeks ago when I was cleaning my house. Out of my usual brand of toilet cleaner, I grabbed a bottle of Javex sitting around the house from my pre-toxin awareness days. I used it (sparingly) to clean the toilets in my home...

## Symptoms of Household Toxins

The next day I woke up with what I thought was the start of a cold. My chest felt heavy and I could not seem to draw a full breath into my lungs. I also had a vague headache, and a "tickle" in my throat, but no other cold like symptoms developed. Later on that day, I developed a shallow, dry cough which felt like my lungs were trying to clear whatever was irritating them.

These symptoms lasted for four days. Coincidence? I don't

think so; this is how my lungs felt most of the time before I switched to non-toxic products. The products I now use are all made with tea tree oil, an anti-viral, anti-bacterial, natural ingredient. My respirologist agrees, as my asthma-like symptoms have disappeared since switching to these non-toxic products.

## Houseplants Remove Household Toxins

You can also make your home healthier by adding [house plants to your decor](#). Not only do plants look nice, but they can also help keep your family healthy. Carbon dioxide and the VOCs described above, as well as other harmful gases such as benzene, formaldehyde, and trichloroethylene are absorbed through the roots as well as through pores in the leaves of plants. In exchange, beneficial and healthy products like oxygen and moisture are released into the air for us to breathe.

Choose plants such as spider plants, dracaena, English ivy, mother-in-law tongues, bamboo palms, and other tropical plants. These choices are all easy to grow and readily available. Tropical plants are suitable for indoors in homes and offices because they are used to growing and processing gases in reduced light under the canopies of jungles and rain forests. Water your plants thoroughly with warm water and let the soil dry out between watering; too much water is the easiest way to kill your house plants.

Fifteen medium to large plants (greater than six-inch pots) in an average-sized 2000 square foot home can greatly improve the air quality in your home. So, get growing!

## In Conclusion

Get rid of the common household toxins making your family sick by removing offending chemical compounds and adding

houseplants. Check out a recent post on what I've learned about [houseplant care](#). My house is fast becoming a jungle, but I love it.

A green landscape outside can improve the air quality in your yard and even your neighbourhood as well. Planting lots of shrubs, trees, perennials and annuals can turn your yards into a healthy environment for you as well [as the birds](#) and other wildlife.