

# DETOX by DESIGN

megan mikkelsen

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AT HOME

### THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

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#### **RADON**

Radon is a radioactive colorless gas that forms in the soil and moves into homes through cracks and holes in the foundation.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), all homes should be tested for Radon

The EPA suggests starting with a short term test to determine if the radon level is 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or greater. If level is over 4 pCi/L, follow-up with a long term test. *(Click to follow link)*

#### **MOLD**

It is best to use your eyes and nose before ordering a test kit for mold. According to the EPA, if mold is visible, testing isn't needed. *(Click to follow link)*

Look for mold in these problem areas:

- bath or shower
- toilet
- sink
- kitchen sink (in, on, or under)
- fridge
- pantry
- microwave
- stove
- mattress
- windows (and windowsills)
- vents
- couch, curtains
- indoor plants
- fireplace and chimney

To prevent mold, ventilate the air in the bathroom and kitchen, use a dehumidifier, check for leaky faucets and pipes, have your chimney and fireplace professionally cleaned, and keep mattresses and couches clean and dry. Here's more information on controlling mold in the home. *(Click to follow link)*

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## DUST MITES

Dust mites are in almost every home and can be found in mattresses, curtains, bedding, furniture, and carpets.

To keep dust mites at bay keep humidity lower than 50%, wash bedding weekly in hot water, use allergen blocking mattress and pillow covers, and vacuum and dust regularly.

### Testing for indoor allergens:

MARIA Services analyzes dust to determine if 11 common allergens that may be in your home. Includes dust mites, dogs, cats, birch, and timothy grass. *(Click to follow link)*

## VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS

Volatile Organic Compounds, also known as VOCs, are released (called off-gassing) by chemical products often found in paints, cleaners, preserved wood, dry-cleaned fabrics, building materials, furniture, office equipment and craft materials.

Some VOCs are toxic. Short term exposure can irritate the eyes and respiratory tract, and cause headaches, dizziness, fatigue, memory impairment, and nausea. Long term exposure can damage the kidneys, liver, and central nervous system.

The VOC formaldehyde is commonly found in particle board products, glues, permanent press fabrics, paints, paper products, medicine, and cosmetics. Formaldehyde is a known human carcinogen.

To reduce off gassing from VOCs, increase ventilation, avoid formaldehyde containing products, seal unfinished manufactured wood, and wash permanent press clothing before wearing.

There are home testing kits available to test for VOCs. *(Click to follow link)*

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## LEAD

Lead was banned from use in 1978 and houses built before then are likely to contain lead-based paint. Exposure to lead happens when paint is chipping, peeling, deteriorating or if it is improperly scraped or sanded.

Lead is also found in:

- contaminated soil
- drinking water
- toys
- jewelry
- imported candy
- cosmetics

Lead is linked with organ system toxicity and even death. Children six years and younger and pregnant women are more susceptible to the dangers of lead exposure.

Here are some tips to prevent lead exposure:

- Inspect painted surfaces for cracking and peeling and use a Lead-Safe Certified contractor for repair and remodels. *(Click to follow link)*
- Clean your home to minimize dust.
- Remove shoes and wash hands after working or playing outdoors.
- Stay up to date on toy and product recalls *(Click to follow link)*
- If exposed to lead at work or hobby, use separate shoes and clothes. Shower before coming home, put dirty clothes in a plastic bag and wash separately.
- Avoid pottery, dishes, and ceramics that are imported.
- Check the quality of your drinking water through the Consumer Confidence Report provided by your utility company and find resources for local water testing on the EPA website. *(Click to follow link)*