

10 Easy Ways to Have a Super Natural Home

By Beth Greer

Here is a summary of 10 easy ways to decrease the amount of chemical toxins you are exposed to daily. Not only will you be healthier, your home will be transformed into a safe haven, and you will also help create a healthier planet!

What Goes *In* You

1. Eat organic or pesticide-free foods whenever possible. Shop at Farmer's Markets or plant your own garden.
2. Read labels and avoid food additives like MSG, trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils) and artificial sweeteners and artificial colors; they can cause behavioral and health problems.
3. Choose filtered tap water over bottled; it will have less bacteria and chemical contaminants. The bottled water industry is largely unregulated in the United States. Choose glass or stainless steel water containers.

What Goes *On* You

4. Use natural, chemical-free body care products and cosmetics with the fewest and safest ingredients. Watch out for parabens, as well as the chemicals DEA (used as a foaming agent in shampoo and baby wash) and BHT (used as a solvent in lipstick and nail polish).
5. Be cautious of products with "fragrance" including shampoo, lotions, and perfume. They contain phthalates, known to interfere with our hormones. Pick those made from essential oils instead. Check out safecosmetics.org.

What Surrounds You

6. Clean your house with non-toxic natural cleaning products. Try vinegar, baking soda, and hydrogen peroxide. Avoid chlorine bleach, strong solvents, ammonia, antibacterial products made with triclosan, as well as synthetically fragrances candles, laundry detergents, air fresheners and dryer sheets.

7. Avoid volatile organic compounds –VOCs found in vinyl wallpaper and floor coverings, new carpeting, and paint.

8. Sleep on a mattress made from untreated, non-toxic natural materials. If you can't afford a new mattress, buy a wool and organic cotton mattress topper.

9. Switch to sheets and towels made with bamboo or organic cotton. Regular cotton is one of the most intensively sprayed crops in the world. By some estimates, cotton accounts for 25% of all pesticides used in the U.S. Macy's and Pottery Barn now sell organic cotton.

10. Get rid of non-stick, Teflon cooking pans; they emit potentially toxic fumes when heated. Use cast-iron, stainless steel, enamel, or glass cookware.

Beth is author of the book *Super Natural Home: Improve Your Health, Home and Planet...One Room at a Time* (Rodale 2009).

Visit Beth's website for more tips and resources: www.BethGreer.com.