

10 Ways to Green Your Home for Your New Baby



You've got a glow on your face, and some exciting news to share with family and friends. Congratulations! You're expecting, and if you're like most moms-to-be, your nesting instinct is about to kick into overdrive.

While that means different things to different people, one thing it should mean to every mom and dad is creating a home that's clean, green, and environmentally safe. Your growing baby is exposed to the air you breathe, and you want your surroundings to be as healthy as possible. Keeping your home toxin-free is an easy thing to do, and one of the most important gifts you can give to your new arrival.

Here's Seventh Generation's list of 10 ways to ready your home for your new baby:

1) Prepare your baby's room as early as possible in your pregnancy, especially if you plan to paint or buy new carpeting or furniture. You want to give new materials plenty of time to off-gas any hazardous vapors they might emit. And don't forget—you're pregnant! So get someone else to do the painting and stay away from those fumes.

2) **Start cleaning house the safe way**—with biodegradable cleaners made from natural and non-toxic ingredients. Natural cleaners won't fill your home with chemical fumes or coat its surfaces with unhealthy residues.

3) **Eat organic food when possible.** Conventionally-produced foods can contain genetically-modified ingredients as well as traces of pesticides and other chemicals. A healthy diet benefits you and your baby.

4) **Store pesticides somewhere else.** Growing babies are vulnerable to even tiny amounts of the poisons pesticides contain. This includes all pet flea and tick products, bug repellents, anti-mildew products, moth balls, fly strips, and bait traps.

5) **Dust with a damp cloth.** Because household dust is the final resting place for many of the toxins that enter our homes, get into the habit of dusting with a slightly damp cloth instead of traditional dusters, which can stir dust and chemical residue back into the air.

6) **Open the windows.** The EPA has found that the air inside our homes can be up to five more polluted than the air outside. So open your windows as often as possible.

7) **Choose toys made from wood and natural fibers instead of plastic.** Soft plastic toys can leach out phthalates, a hormone-disrupting chemical, while hard plastics may expose your child to another hormone-disrupting chemical called bisphenol-a.

8) **Use glass baby bottles** to protect your newborn from the bisphenol-a found in many polycarbonate (#7) plastic models.

9) **Buy a natural crib mattress** that is free of the synthetic foams and fibers, vinyl coverings, flame retardants, and chemical treatments commonly found in conventional crib mattresses.

10) **Choose organic natural fibers** for clothing, bedding, and other items. These products will also be free of treatments that can expose infants to chemicals and other unhealthy compounds.