



Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec  
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### Going Green — Your Bedroom

Your bedroom is one of the most important rooms in a home. It is a place where we regenerate and sleep, where we allow the body to relax after a tiring day at work, away from the ambient noise and toxins of the city air. It is therefore imperative to ensure that our bedroom is a safe space for the body and the mind, and not another attack on our health. Being aware and avoidance of the most common substances that can exist in our bedrooms is the only way to better protect our health. Let us walk you through the main source of toxic substances in the bedroom and our recommendations on how to avoid them!

**Use organic and natural materials for your pillows, mattresses and bed linen.** A lot of mattresses and pillows use flame retardants, polyurethane foam, vinyl and latex. All of which are responsible for the releasing of toxic substances into the air. Flame retardants are a variety of substances that are used to prevent or slow down fire. Their effects on health includes endocrine and thyroid disruption, immunity and reproductive problems,

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and cancer. Polyurethane foam, which is made from a type of plastic, has been found to cause asthma, lung damage, respiratory problems and skin and eye irritation. In other words, it is always important to check the materials and substances used in your mattresses and pillows. Even if we usually cover them with sheets and pillowcases (which should also be organic), we still allow ourselves to rest on them for at least 7 hours every day. The more natural and organic our bed is, the better.

**Prefer frequent damp dusting.** As a general rule, it is important to keep your bedroom as dust-free as possible. Dust is not only dust; it carries dead cells, micro plastics, fungi, bacteria, etc... And although it is inevitable, regular dusting is better for you, as it can cause skin or eye irritation as well as asthma. The reason why damp dusting is more efficient than regular dusting is pretty straightforward: using a damp cloth captures more dust due to the microfibers and moisture in the cloth than regular dusting, during which a part of the dust just floats around in the air instead of being removed. Finally, using products to kill bacteria and other pathogens is not the best idea. These products contain a lot of toxic substances that are released in the air while cleaning, which are harmful to human health as well.

**Give your senses a break by switching to fragrance free laundry.**

Fragranced products are attractive, as they cover bad smells and perfume a room. However, fragrances contain chemicals that can cause skin and eye irritation, cough, asthma, migraine, dermatitis and other health conditions. You do not need these chemicals in your room to freshen the air. Using fragrance free laundry is a better option, not only because it shields you from unnecessary substances, but also because it might force you to wash these sheets a little more often. Remember that when we sleep, we sweat. A



damp and dark environment is the best for the growth of bacteria and microbes. If you still want nice scents in your home, try this: place a couple of cinnamon sticks, cloves and cardamom in a pot of water and gently simmer. They will release a pleasant aroma in the house. Letting fresh air in, taking the trash out regularly, and not putting the dirty laundry basket in the bedroom will also help in keeping the air fresh.

**Let's open these windows.** Last but not least, aerate your room every morning, even if the weather is cold or hot. Contrary to popular belief, the space in which we are the most exposed to dangerous pollutants is indoor, not outdoor. By letting fresh air from the outside come in, you allow all the dust, bacteria and all the substances we have mentioned above to get out. So, close your bedroom door, turn off the AC or heating, and open everything for 10 minutes!

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