



Creating a Safe Bedroom for People with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)

Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB) Project

Make your bedroom a safe and healthy place for sleep and relaxation with these tips:

Important tips: Keep surfaces clutter-free and dust frequently. Use a slightly damp cloth for dusting to prevent inhalation of dust particles, and rinse often. Avoid potpourri and scented oils in the bedroom. Maintain proper ventilation by opening windows when there is no outside pollution (smog, laundry fumes, smoke, vehicle or lawn mower exhaust, etc.) or activities that involve toxic products.

Cleaning: Use only fragrance-free and healthy cleaning products—dust frequently with a damp cloth. Refer to the EcoLivingGuide.ca for eco-friendly resources, product selection and homemade solutions.

Bedding: Choose scent or fragrance-free and non-toxic options for sheets, pillowcases, comforters, pillows, and mattresses. Consider organic cotton or natural latex mattresses and use organic cotton sheets. Wash them with fragrance-free, non-toxic laundry detergent.

Closets: Avoid cramming your closets to their full capacity, as it can create a breeding ground for mold and mildew. Maintain good airflow and avoid using mothballs or chemical protectants. Clean and air your clothing; do not store unwashed items in the closet. Keep outdoor shoes at the entrance to prevent tracking dirt and chemicals into your home.

Window Coverings: Opt for washable window coverings and wash them to eliminate scents. Choose cotton curtains that can be laundered frequently or use low-emission metal blinds. Avoid vinyl and dry-clean-only fabrics. Regularly check windows for condensation and mold growth and improve ventilation to reduce condensation.

Furniture: Minimize the amount of furniture in your bedroom. Look for formaldehyde-free options like solid wood or metal furniture. If you have particle board furniture, seal all sides of the exposed panels with a zero-VOC paint or sealer, using at least three coats.

Walls: Clean your walls by wiping them with a dampened cloth and fragrance-free eco soap mixed with baking soda. Repeat the process if the water becomes soiled.

Paint: Use VOC-free, least-toxic paints on your bedroom walls. Always test the product outside your home to make sure you can tolerate it. After the room has been painted make sure to aerate the room and increase ventilation. Live in another room until you are comfortable in your



bedroom again. Do not use any product that triggers symptoms. If your house is older, be cautious of lead paint and asbestos, and call a professional if removal is necessary.

Bathroom: Ensure your ensuite or nearby bathroom is free of mold. Use charcoal filters to remove chlorine from showers and baths. Keep the bathroom well-ventilated and avoid excess humidity. Replace worn caulking with less toxic alternatives to maintain a well-sealed tub and shower.

Flooring: Wooden or tiled flooring is best. If you have wall-to-wall carpeting, sprinkle baking soda and vacuum frequently. Use fragrance-free soap for washing scented carpets. Remove scented carpeting, clean the room thoroughly, and air it out. Unfinished wooden flooring is preferable, but if the flooring is plywood, explore healthier floor covering options like zero-VOC cork flooring, Marmoleum, ceramic tiles or pre-varnished wood flooring. Note, however, that pre-varnished or hardwood flooring could off-gas terpenes for a long time. Test all products for tolerance.

Screens and Electronics: Keeping screens and electronics out of the bedroom promotes better health by promoting relaxation, improving sleep quality and reducing exposure to blue light, which can disrupt the body's natural sleep-wake cycle.

Remember, your bedroom is now your oasis. Evaluate everything you bring into it: Is it fragrance-free? Is it necessary for the bedroom? Will it collect dust? Could it trigger or worsen your reactions? Listen to your body and prioritize your health and well-being.

This tipsheet is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Consult with a healthcare professional for personalized guidance and treatment options for your situation.