



The Non-Toxic Nursery

Melissa Cooper Sargent

Preparations for a new addition to the family often involve cleaning, painting, renovating, and new furnishings. Here are some tips to assuring a healthy home for babies before and after they are born:

- Rely on **baking soda and vinegar for cleaning and deodorizing**. Remember white vinegar is a food-grade anti-microbial. Fill a spray bottle with 50/ 50 vinegar and distilled water to disinfect instead of using harsh germ killers.
- Employ **steam, vinegar, or natural enzyme solutions to clean carpets**. Request commercial services to leave off the chemical treatments for stain protection, deodorizing, and disinfecting. Visit www.afmsafecoat.com for safer carpet cleaners and sealers. [Earth Friendly Everyday Stain & Odor Remover](#) and [Seventh Generation Carpet Cleaner](#) are available locally in stores.

LocalMotion books with DIY recipes:

- [Better Basics for the Home](#)
- [Clean & Green](#)
- [Clean House, Clean Planet](#)
- [Green Up Your Clean Up](#)
- [Home Enlightenment](#)
- [Home Safe Home](#)

Carpet Cleaning Recipe from www.eartheasy.com

1. Mix equal parts white vinegar and water in a spray bottle;
2. Spray directly on stain;
3. Let sit for several minutes;
4. Clean with a brush or sponge using warm soapy water.

For a **heavy duty carpet cleaner**, mix 1/4 cup each of salt, borax and vinegar. Rub paste into carpet and leave for a few hours. Vacuum.

- Ask for **VOC-free paint** at your local paint store or on-line. **VOC** stands for volatile organic compounds. VOCs readily evaporate at room temperature. Many are known or suspected carcinogens, including formaldehyde, benzene, toluene, and styrene.
- Choose **water-based wood sealants** and finishes which have far fewer VOCs than oil-based.
- Invest in a **natural cotton or latex mattress** with a layer of wool. Wool is naturally fire resistant. If using a mattress containing chemical fire retardants (as most do), create a barrier between the mattress and the baby with a **mattress pad** made of natural materials.
- Employ **wool puddle pads** instead of vinyl or other plastic mattress protectors.
- Dress the crib mattress with an **organic cotton sheet** (Purchase three to insure that one is always clean!)

- Opt for **tight fitting cotton sleepwear** for infants older than 9 months instead of polyester pajamas and robes treated with fire-resistant chemicals. (Sleepwear intended for babies 9 months or younger does not have fire safety standards).
- Use **chlorine-free disposables or natural cotton cloth diapers**. Chlorine-free disposable diapers are widely available: Natural Choices brand can be found at Meijer, [Seventh Generation diapers](#) are at Toys-R-U's and health food stores, [Tushies](#) are at Vitamin Village and Good Food Co., and Whole Foods markets have their own line, 365 Everyday Value.

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- **Minimize the amount of body care products** used on baby. Recent research shows a strong correlation between the amount of lotion, shampoo, and powders used on infants and the amount of phthalates in their urine. **Phthalates** are thought to interfere with the male sex hormone testosterone and alter genital development. Phthalates often go unlisted on labels because they are used within “fragrance” formulations, which are considered proprietary.
- Wash and moisturize with **natural personal care products** for mom and baby. Avoid fragrances and other ingredients such as phthalates, parabens, and sodium laureth sulfate. Seek out the USDA Organic Seal or make your own products at home. Natural plant oils such as grapeseed, jojoba, rice bran, wheat germ, and olive oil moisturize skin more effectively than traditional petroleum based baby (mineral) oil.
- **Avoid the nail salon.** Pamper pregnant and nursing moms with natural polishes free of DBP (di-butyl *phthalate*), toluene, and formaldehyde. (www.honeybeegardens.com; www.nomiss.com).
- **Adhere to fish advisories** and restaurant/ shopping guides to minimize mercury exposure (www.michigan.gov/mdch-toxic, then click Michigan Fish Advisory) for pregnant and nursing moms. Trim off the fat to reduce other toxins such as PCBs and dioxins. Avoid shark, swordfish, tilefish, and king mackerel.
- Choose **glass bottles with silicon** nipples. Be sure to buy BPA-free bottles if glass is not an option. Also opt for silicon or natural rubber (Ecobinky) if using pacifiers.
- Give babies **teethers** made of organic cotton or natural wood rather than plastic.
- Check www.healthycar.org for **car seats** with fewest chemicals

On-line sources for **organic cloth diapers, sheets, mattresses, more:**

www.betterbabybums.com
www.betterforbabies.com
www.ecobaby.com
www.lifekind.com
www.mommasbaby.com
www.mother-ease.com
www.naturalbedstore.com
www.the-organic-baby.com
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