



CARPET DANGERS

Over 60% of homes in the USA have carpeting. Carpets cover the floors of our business and schools. Children play for hours on them, infants crawl on them and breathe deeply of their fumes, proud homeowners inhale that 'new-carpet smell', and all the while we are being poisoned by the chemicals, allergens and toxic dust that lurks in our carpets.

Whether your carpets are new or old, they probably have more bad things in them than you want to imagine. The list is staggering. For new carpets there are 'volatile organic compounds' VOC's. These include toluene, benzene, formaldehyde, ethyl benzene, styrene, acetone and a host of other chemicals, some of which have already made the EPA's list of Extremely Hazardous Substances. Known carcinogens such as p-Dichlorobenzene are in new carpets, as are chemicals that produce fetal abnormalities in test animals. These chemicals also cause hallucinations, nerve damage and respiratory illness in humans.

Other compounds in new carpeting that affect your health are adhesives, stain protectors, mothproofing and flame retardants. That 'new carpet smell' comes from 4-PC, associated with eye, nose and upper respiratory problems that are suffered by many new carpet owners. 4-PC is used in the latex backing of 95% of US carpets. In 2000 the 3M Company removed the chemical perfluoro-octanyl salphonate from their product, Scotchgard, because it had been found to cause reproductive problems in rats. It had also been found in high levels in the wildlife of urban areas. Mothproofing chemicals contain naphthalene, which is known to produce toxic reactions, especially in newborns. Fire retardants often contain PBDE's which are known to cause damage to thyroid, immune system and brain development functions in humans.

Older carpets can be more of a hazard than new ones: Not only do they contain the chemicals banned from more recent production, they also have had years to accumulate pounds of dust mites, dirt, pesticides and other toxins brought in on shoes, feet and pet's paws. Did you know that your carpet can hold 8 times its weight in toxin filled dirt and you can't even see the trapped dirt that your carpet is hiding! The EPA has stated that 80% of human exposure to pesticides happens *indoors*. Every time you spray for bugs or use a fogger, the chemicals settle in the rug and stay there for years. If you paint your room the curing paint leaves its VOC's in the carpet for you to inhale long after the walls no longer smells of paint. Just put in a new wood or laminate floor? You'll be living with those toxins, {sealers, solvents and glues} even after you clean with all the right products. Household dust contains lead and other heavy metals, because lead is in our soil and will be for a long time to come. Older carpets are so toxic that your chances of being exposed to hazardous chemicals are 10-50 times higher in a carpeted room than outdoors. If the carpet is plush or shag, your risk increases substantially.

What can you do? You can take action to reduce your exposure to carpet toxins. First, if you can, get rid of the carpeting. If not that, then vacuum with a Well Sealed High Quality HEPA Vacuum Cleaner that can do a much better job of cleaning your carpets than the cheaper vacuum cleaners found at most department stores.

Low quality vacuum cleaners are not sealed well! Even many of the so called filtered ones often leak air through gaps in their cases causing dirty air to blow back into your indoor environment! Steam cleaning can kill dust mites and bacteria. A good doormat will stop a lot of toxins right at the door. Take your shoes off when entering your house and you make it a much safer place. If you must buy a rug or carpet, choose one made of naturally flame retardant fibers such as wool, and get a woven rug. Don't glue your new carpet to the floor, attach it with staples instead. Finally, get a Quality HEPA Air Cleaner or Air Purifier that will remove dust and toxins that rise from the carpet or rug every time you step on it or vacuum. If you follow as many of these precautions as possible, you will certainly have a cleaner and healthier home.

Written by: [Absolute Air Cleaners](#)

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