

Green Homes: Occupant Health Checklist

The [U. S. Green Building Council California](#) (USGBC-CA) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to making California a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable state for all. Under [Green Homes California](#), USGBC-CA launched a [Healthy Building Commitment](#) to provide healthy and resilient spaces to live, work, and play for tenants and residents.

5 Healthy Building Principles



Why are air and water quality important?

High-quality air and water are crucial for creating safe and sustainable homes, promoting health, and increasing overall comfort. Air pollutants such as dust, allergens (like mold), and airborne chemicals can exacerbate respiratory conditions and lead to health problems. Poor air quality can also contribute to fatigue, headaches, and discomfort. Similarly, contaminated water can harbor harmful pathogens, chemicals, and pollutants that negatively affect human health, making access to clean water fundamental for staying hydrated, cooking, and maintaining hygiene.



Don't know where to start?

Use these checklists ordered from quick, no-cost strategies to projects requiring more effort!



Improve Indoor Air Quality

- Avoid** using heavily scented products or room fragrance sprays, or burning candles or incense
- Regularly **vacuum carpets** and rugs
- Control humidity** and mold by ventilating bathrooms and sources of moisture
- Use fans and **open windows** to flush out air, and use **vents** to remove cooking fumes
- Store chemicals in enclosed or **well-ventilated** areas
- Use **electric appliances** when possible, and limit fireplace use
- Choose **low-VOC (volatile organic compound)** models when purchasing rugs or furniture
- Use a portable HEPA-certified **air filtration system** or purifier
- Install **indoor air quality (IAQ)** sensors to detect and maintain healthy air quality



Water Quality Monitoring & Testing

- Review local or municipal **water quality reports**
- Run the tap in the morning before drinking to **avoid water sitting in pipes** overnight
- Avoid drinking **hot water** from the tap
- Install a **water filter** on faucets used for drinking and cooking, or use a pitcher or dispenser to filter
- Conduct annual **water quality testing** to detect contaminants



Use Green Cleaning Practices

- ❑ **Avoid** heavily scented cleaning products, or try 50/50 water and white vinegar (or baking soda)
- ❑ Use **environmentally friendly products** to reduce exposure to chemicals
- ❑ Choose **EPA Safer Choice, Eco Logo, and Green Seal Certified** cleaning products
- ❑ Swap plastic bottles for **glass bottles**
- ❑ Look for personal hygiene products on the **Environmental Working Group's (EWG)** website to help select options that are free from particular chemicals of concern

Access to nature, movement, and nourishment, optimized sound/lighting, and a focus on mental health are also crucial components for maintaining a healthy living environment.

Green spaces offer opportunities for relaxation, physical activity, and social interaction, contributing to overall well-being and reducing stress levels. Getting daily exercise and eating nutritious food supports health and helps prevent diseases such as obesity and heart disease. Additionally, increasing natural daylight and limiting unwanted noise in your home can enhance sleep quality and improve your mood. Finally, prioritizing mental health by establishing routines and practicing mindfulness increases happiness and quality of life.



Increase Access to Green Space

- ❑ Keep **indoor plants** to help with air purification and to connect with nature
- ❑ Grow outdoor plants such as a **fruit or vegetable garden**, and try composting



Promote Movement and Nourishment

- ❑ Try to stand, stretch, walk, or move every **30 minutes** when at home
- ❑ **Drink water** throughout the day
- ❑ Eat balanced meals by prioritizing **avoiding processed foods**

Additional Tips

Improve Sound and Lighting

- ❑ Measure light levels in your home using a free phone app, and maximize daylight access by using adjustable window shades
- ❑ Measure noise levels using a free phone app
- ❑ Use noise-canceling/masking devices, nature sounds, or ear plugs to adjust surrounding sounds

Prioritize Mental Health

- ❑ Establish routines by creating a daily schedule
- ❑ Take regular breaks for movement, snacks, and meals
- ❑ Incorporate a mindfulness or meditation practice into your day



Email us!



Healthy Building Commitment



Green Homes California