

## HOW TO BUY NON-TOXIC INTERIOR PAINT:

Conventional interior paint typically contains volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which evaporate and cause harmful fumes during paint curing. Prolonged exposure to these organic solvents can lead to kidney disease and cancer. In addition, petroleum based paints contribute to ozone layer damage. Most paint manufacturers offer high-quality, non-toxic paints made from natural products that pose no health risks to humans or the environment.

- Look for an EPA registration number on paint cans. The EPA only regulates paint that contain toxic ingredients. For the same reason, stay away from paints regulated or restricted by OSHA or DOT.
- Understand the difference between no or low-VOC paint, and non-toxic, natural paint. Most paint companies designate certain products as low VOC or low odor, which should not be confused with a non-toxic designation. Although low VOC paints have almost no odor and are much safer than conventional interior paints, they still contain harmful chemicals and can irritate the eyes, throat, lungs and skin.
- Read paint ingredients carefully. Non-toxic interior paints contain natural, non-hazardous products like plant dyes, essential oils, milk protein, clay and resin.
- Add a natural color tint. Conventionally color tints usually increase a paint's VOC content, so purchase premixed colors or buy specially designated non-toxic color additives to achieve a desired shade. Using natural pigments can limit color choices, but paint manufacturers recognize and are now responding to the demand for more non-toxic paint products.
- Buy non-toxic paint products for interior project start-to-finish. Paint companies sell non-toxic primers, sealers and paint strippers.
- Be prepared to spend a bit more. Non-toxic paint is often more expensive than conventional paint, but remodeling your home with products safe for your family and the environment is worth the additional cost.

### Tips and Warnings:

- Zero VOC paints often contain VOCs. According to EPA regulations, a paint with less than 5 grams of VOC per liter qualifies as a zero VOC product.
- Clean paintbrushes and other supplies with a non-toxic products like turpentine substitute or citrus-based cleansers. To cut down on cleaning frequency, wrap paint roller covers and brushes in plastic bags to lock in moisture overnight.
- Buy non-toxic paint with the Green Seal [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org). Green Seal certified goods are recognized by a non-profit organization that endorses environmentally safe products.
- Women who are pregnant, children, pets and people with compromised immune systems are especially vulnerable to the negative effects of VOCs and other toxic ingredients of conventional paint.

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