How to Create A Safe & Non-Toxic Nursery

written by Beth Mark | November 12, 2015

As the parent of a little one, you may quickly discover that you spend large amounts of time in the nursery. In fact, it may become one of the most popular spots in your house.

It's exciting to plan the decor and design of the room, but have you thought about the safety of the space? Apart from the fact that eventually a mobile baby will put everything into his or her mouth – and is closer to the floor while doing it (where air pollutants and toxins can settle) – babies are more susceptible to toxins and chemicals in their environment than adults.

Simple is best when it comes to your child…and every little change can make a big difference.

Quicker metabolisms (which lead to faster absorption of toxins), weaker immune systems, and smaller body proportions put children at a higher risk when it comes to exposure. As you begin to collect items to help welcome your child into the world and into your home, consider these ways to make your nursery a safer haven for your little one:

Organic Cotton: To ensure that the use of toxic ingredients have not been used to make the fabrics you'll wrap your little one in, opt for organic cottons for clothing, blankets, and any additional soft items (bibs, burp cloths, towels, etc). In

general, it’s also good to wash clothing before first use to ensure they are safe and ready for baby. Organic cotton is grown without the use of pesticides and fertilizers, so it’s an eco-friendly choice as well.

- Check out our Greenbuds Baby Organic cotton sheets, mattresses and more at our shop.

Feeding: While the dangers of toxic chemicals like BPA found in plastic baby bottles and sippy cups are now widely known, some replacement plastics being used have also been found to be harmful. Switching to glass or stainless steel will allow you to avoid this exposure altogether. Consider throwing away older plastic feeding products and checking to see what type of plastic makes up your feeding utensils and accessories.

Toys & Playtime: Again, it’s best to steer clear of plastics when possible. Natural materials like unpainted wooden toys and plush toys made with organic cotton are safest. If toys are painted, look to see whether the paint is non-toxic and lead-free.

The “Big Ticket” Items: Finally, it’s important to remember that even the paint used on the nursery walls and furniture can have an impact on the space and the health of your child.

Paint: Using zero VOC (volatile organic compounds), solvent free, and non-toxic paint is best. Paints that are “Green Seal-Certified” have the additional benefit of meeting the strictest indoor-air-quality standards in the US. Read more about VOC-free paint.

Furniture: Just like paint, furniture can also “off-gas” or emit toxins for years after purchase, so it’s best to find cribs that are formaldehyde-free. Because of this, buying used furniture is also a good way to limit toxin exposure.

Clothing & Bedding: For the same reason that organic clothing and blankets are best, organic mattresses and bedding are also

a healthy choice. Most standard crib mattresses can contain harmful chemicals including formaldehyde, flame-retardants, polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), PVCs, antibacterials, and waterproofing finishes. Find organic cotton alternatives on Pure Living.

Above All, Keep it Simple

Don’t forget that sometimes the easiest ways to keep this special space safe are cost-free: clean it often (using toxin-free products), let fresh air in when possible, and keep the “stuff” to a minimum to reduce the amount of materials and chemicals in the room. In the end, don’t let these considerations overwhelm or complicate what should be a calming space.

Find more specific items to keep in mind while planning your nursery.