

VOCs / Chemical Off-Gassing Checklist

A record of new materials, products, and reactions that follow renovations or changes.

One page at a time. Add this sheet to your home environment binder and compare observations as you go.

01 Chemicals released from everyday materials

Volatile organic compounds evaporate from paint, flooring, furniture, cabinetry, adhesives, cleaning products, and air fresheners at room temperature. Indoor VOC levels often exceed outdoor levels, especially after renovations or when new materials are introduced. Off-gassing tends to be strongest when materials are new and can worsen with heat, humidity, and poor ventilation.

02 Chemical smell, eye irritation, reactions after changes

A chemical or "new" smell after painting, installing flooring, or bringing in new furniture is a recognizable sign. Headaches, eye or throat irritation, and fatigue that begin or worsen after a home change - and improve when windows are open - are common patterns worth recording.

03 The smell is familiar, and symptoms overlap with many conditions

VOCs are often odorless at typical indoor levels, and when they do have a smell it is often perceived as normal. Symptoms including fatigue, headaches, and brain fog overlap with many other conditions. Because off-gassing naturally decreases over time, symptoms may gradually improve without the source ever being recognized.

04 Timeline, location, and what changed

Connect symptoms to a timeline of changes - what was added, installed, or introduced to the home and when. Note whether symptoms are stronger in certain rooms, whether they ease with ventilation, and whether reactions follow specific products like cleaning supplies, candles, or fragrances.

HOME ENVIRONMENT BINDER / OBSERVATION SHEET

VOCs / Chemical Off-Gassing Checklist

Date checked: _____ Areas covered: _____

Check anything you notice. This is a record of observations, not conclusions - there are no wrong answers.

New materials & renovations

- ☐ New furniture, flooring, carpet, cabinetry, or paint introduced in the past 1-2 years

Example: New laminate flooring installed in the living room three months ago - strong chemical smell for several weeks.

- ☐ Recent painting, caulking, adhesive use, or renovation work in any room
- ☐ Chemical or solvent odor from a garage, storage area, or HVAC system

Products & cleaning

- ☐ Sensitivity or reactions to cleaning products, fragrances, candles, or air fresheners
- ☐ Plug-in air fresheners, scented sprays, or synthetic fragrance products used regularly

Symptom patterns

- ☐ Headaches, eye irritation, or brain fog that began or worsened after a home change
- ☐ Symptoms that ease when windows are open or when spending time outside
- ☐ Reactions that appear to follow use of a specific product or entry into a specific room

ROOMS OR AREAS OF HIGHEST CONCERN

WHEN SYMPTOMS FEEL STRONGEST / WEATHER, TIME, ROOM, ACTIVITY

NOTES

A checklist is a snapshot. The patterns that matter most tend to appear when you compare one across weeks, seasons, and rooms.