

# THE DIRTY DOZEN

## 12 Simple Ways to Keep Dust and Dirt Out of Our Homes

Pollutants can be tracked into our homes on our shoes and clothing. Invisible residues of pesticides, carcinogens, solvents, paints, mold, bacteria, lead, and other toxins that are brought inside can get on our hands and food and be eaten or inhaled. Over a long period of time, these agents accumulate and can increase the chance that illness will develop.

### Ways to get rid of dust and dirt:

1. **BEST PRACTICE:** Remove your shoes when entering your home! Wear footwear that is dedicated to indoor use.
2. Place long floor runners (preferably a commercial doormat) at entrances to your home to trap outdoor dust and dirt. Limit the use of carpets throughout the house, especially deep plush or shag carpets.
3. Vacuum carpets and area rugs using a vacuum with a power brush and HEPA filter once a week (twice a week if you have a crawling child).
4. Bare floors are the best choice. Otherwise, choose floor coverings (runners and area rugs) and furniture and draperies that are easy to clean.
5. Cover bare outdoor areas with trees, shrubs, grass, flowers, or gravel to reduce tracking in dust and dirt.
6. Regularly dust or wash surfaces that are often touched. Wash your hands with regular (not antibacterial) soap and warm water after cleaning, working, handling raw meat, petting animals, changing a diaper, using a bathroom, or gardening, and before preparing food, eating, or touching a baby or ill person.
7. Clean air ducts annually and replace filters every six months.
8. If you work with paints, pesticides, solvents, oils, or toxins, shower and change clothes and shoes before entering your home.
9. Wash fruits and vegetables to remove dust, dirt, and certain pesticide residues.
10. Keep toddlers supplied with clean pacifiers, and wash their hands with regular (not antibacterial) soap and warm water before eating and after using a bathroom.
11. Have toddlers, painted surfaces, and dust tested for lead if you live in a pre-1940 house.
12. Have a trained person perform a home environmental health assessment before renting or buying a house or having a baby. Get a do-it-yourself assessment at:  
[www.alaw.org/air\\_quality/master\\_home\\_environmentalist/free-home\\_assessment.html](http://www.alaw.org/air_quality/master_home_environmentalist/free-home_assessment.html)

[www.environmentaloncology.org](http://www.environmentaloncology.org)



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