

Home Sweet Home—or Chemical Waste Dump?

by Kelly Stripling, Certified Biblical Health Coach

Eco-friendly ideas have been welcomed in our home with new fervor for several months now, but our focus has not been to save the planet. We've made changes for our health, to better maintain the bodies God gave us so we can better serve Him. What kind of changes have we made and why? Let me answer the "why" first.

Here are some (shocking to us) statistics, reported in a fairly short book, entitled *Naturally Clean* by Jeffrey Hollender, president of Seventh Generation, which sells products advertised as "safe and environmentally-responsible."

In 2001, a report in *Preventive Medicine* indicated that most people are exposed to levels of carcinogenic (cancer-causing) substances in their homes that can be up to 70 times greater than the highest outdoor pollution levels and that the majority of homes contain levels of toxins that would qualify them as chemical waste sites!

Several surveys report that 44 to 88 million Americans have reactions to common, household chemicals. Reactions include headaches, rashes, breathing problems, and ringing in the ears. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the average American, regardless of age or gender, carries at least 700 pollutants in his body. Independent studies found that roughly 900 contaminants are found in air samples taken from American homes.

These facts are just a peek into the effects chemicals can have on our bodies and homes. One would assume that reading a label could help guide a consumer when deciding what to buy, but federal law does not require all chemicals to be listed on products. It also does not require potential health hazards to be indicated unless the product poses an "immediate" threat if the product is used incorrectly.

In my paper titled "Air Awareness," I'll take a look at some alternatives in the home that have helped us avoid poor health due to breathing in toxic chemicals. Small changes have made a big difference in how my family feels and functions.