

House Hunting for High-Risk & Mold Sensitized Occupants

Use as a guide in choosing a healthier home or to check your existing home for some of the more common sources or causes of moisture, mold, chemical toxins and electric pollution. It is not all-inclusive and there is no guarantee that all the “green” categories will ensure you have chosen a home with no issues.

When house hunting we recommend you use this guide to do “pre-checks” based on some of the data you may find in the online listing or from a “drive-by” which can save time and frustration if you can rule the property in or out prior to scheduling a visit with an agent.

Some points will require a site visit while others may involve professional evaluations which we highly recommend once you have narrowed down the field.

Location Influencers	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Factories			Near Property
Power Plant			Near Property
Farms		Near Property	Adjacent to Property
Golf Course		Near Property	Adjacent to Property
Power Lines	Underground best		Transformers/Substations
Water Well		Have lab tested for chemicals, metals, bacteria, radioactive, radon	Coal ash by-products, Radon, Heavy Metals
Underground Fuel Tanks		Empty	Avoid
Coal Ash Ponds or Fill			Nearby Property
Regional Hurricanes/ Floods etc	No impact	Flooded neighbors	Flooded Home, Significant Wind Damage

Ground	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Flood Plain	Minimal	Low	Moderate to High
Elevation	Above street level	At street level	Below street level
Foundation Grade	At or above ground	At ground	Below ground - basement or sub-grade crawlspace
Slope of Ground	Slope away from foundation	Level with foundation	Slope toward foundation
Foundation Type	Slab if dry, crawlspace if dry	Crawlspace	Basement Crawlspace with trench drains and sump pit
Landscape	Low mulch, no close bushes, no irrigation	Irrigation, higher mulch	Close bushes, high mulch, irrigation directed toward home

Type of Home	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Single Family Detached	Best		
Single Family Attached		Common Walls	
Condo or Townhome		Common Walls & HOA control of some water or mold issues	Common Floors/Ceilings
Apartment		Little control of environment	Avoid if possible
Mobile Home		Avoid if possible	
Modular Home		Higher VOCs when new	

Exterior of Home	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Roof	Pitched	Valleys and Multi-Angled	Flat
Rain Management	Gutters/Downspouts/French Drains or Extensions	Gutters clogged, unattached, no extensions	No gutters
Chimney	Cricket/Flashing Good	Sloping roof toward chimney/no cricket	Cracking brick, no cap
Siding	Brick or Stone w/ Weep Holes Vinyl Fiber Cement Hard Stucco	Fiberboard/Masonite Small areas of damage	Siding over old siding Soft Stucco (EFIS) Siding damaged/rotted multiple areas
Vents in Roof/Siding	Sealed, louvered, flashed		Disconnected, flashing failure
Building Wrap	Exterior side of sheathing	No wrap	Interior side of sheathing

Foundation	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Basement			Avoid
Crawlspace	Sealed w no signs of intrusion of moisture, no musty odors, may need to have checked by pro	Is is dry? Does it smell musty? Are there air ducts there? Is it sealed? Are vents open?	Avoid if below ground level, has water drain trenches and sump pit, musty odors or visible heavy mold growth
Slab	Is ground around foundation dry and sloping away? No signs of water	Very little slab showing above ground level	Exposed slab at ground level, poor drainage around foundation

Non-Living Spaces	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Garage	Detached	Attached	Strong moldy, gas, chemical odors
Shed	Detached	Attached	Strong moldy odors
Exterior Utility Closet			Musty Odors, water stains on common wall to house
Deck	Flashing where deck meets house/deck below threshold of doorways	Deck at door level	No flashing attached to home Water damage at door framing and threshold

Interior	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Odors	None	Some light or stale odors	Musty, chemicals, pets, smoking, air fresheners
Water Staining	None		Any water stains could be hiding mold growth
Flooring	Hardwood, Ceramic Tile	Laminate or Vinyl	Carpet
Ceiling	Smooth, flat with attic or cavity above	Vaulted, Trey	Textured "popcorn" Skylights

Appliances/Bathroom	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Washer	Top Load, clean, new, overflow pan under	Not new	Front loading, upper level, no overflow pan
Refrigerator	Clean, new	Not new, dust under it, dirty drip pan	
Walls	Bathrooms no paper faced sheetrock, no wallpaper		Wallpaper, water stains, paint bubbling or peeling
Shower	Tiled with no cracks in grout or joints		Cracked tiles, old shower stalls, shower seat built-in
Tub	No cracks	Removable side panel, check under if you can	Jet tub
Fireplace		Wood burning or vented gas	Unvented
Gas Stove		Vented	Unvented
Water Heater	Unfinished utility install, overflow drain and pan	Near finished areas	Interior, no overflow drain, rusty

HVAC	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
HVAC in Crawlspace		Ducts in Crawlspace	Leaky poor condition ducts in crawlspace
HVAC in Attic		Ducts in Attic	Leaky poor condition ducts in attic
HVAC in Garage			Avoid
HVAC Size	Have sizing correctly verified by independent HVAC pro	Old systems New system, old ducts	Oversized systems Fiberglass lined
HVAC Zoned			Avoid
Ducts	Clean, no dust or debris	Dusty	Stuck-on dust or mold
Plenums and Trunklines	New, metal interiors	Dusty interiors	Fiberglass interiors
Filters	Metal interior return boxes with filters in home at grills	Central Filter on Handler	Open filter box, neglected filter changing
Window Units			Avoid
PTAC or Built-in Wall (like motel room)	New, clean interior	Must have interior checked and cleaned	Very dirty inside or musty odors

Attic	OK	CAUTION	RED FLAG
Appearance/Odor	No water stains, no odd or musty odors	Odors especially if musty or urine	Musty or urine odors, water stains, mold
Insulation	Batt on Flooring consistent depth	Older batt insulation, some missing areas	Loose cellulose insulation, old loose insulation
Ventilation	Closed, sealed, conditioned properly if ducting for HVAC present	Soffits open no obstructions at eaves, ridge vent	Soffits blocked at eaves, musty odors, mold growth, exhaust vents terminate in attic or at soffits
Spray Foam		Present - should have it checked professionally	Odors, inconsistent appearance, ducts present