

Floor Covering Media

Your Gateway to the Floor Covering Industry

What is in the materials used for your flooring?



It's a simple question. The answer? Not as simple! Suffering from allergies? Challenged to find out what is in the materials used for flooring?



When direct answers aren't available, it's time to look elsewhere. What's a good starting point? Finding the source: dust.

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Easy enough. But not really! There are few important factors to consider, in addition to allergies, such as personal safety:



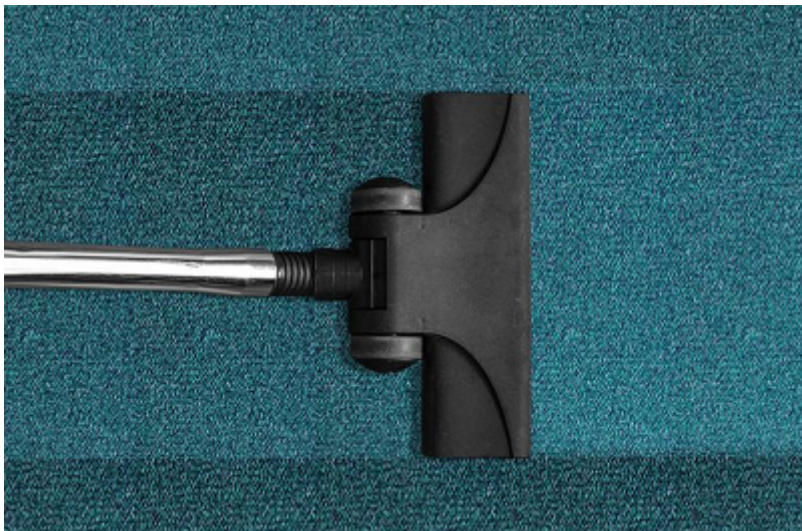
The cleaning and maintenance of ceramic tile and stone flooring are relatively effortless, as neither of these surface types are likely to trap dust, mites, pollen, dander and other airborne particles; most of which are prone to aggravate allergies. But, let's not trade one problem for another: the obvious safety hazards of traversing firm surfaces, especially for the elderly.

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Hardwood flooring may seem a superior choice; for the most part it is. But is it a perfectly safe, surface for allergy sufferers? Hardly! This surface covering can release harmful chemicals into the air. These volatile organic compounds (VOC's) include: formaldehyde from wood, as well as varnishes and sealants. As it turns out, homeowners may experience allergic reactions.



Carpet lovers are in for a surprise, which should not really come as a surprise: this surface harbors numerous chemicals; in the binders, backing, pad and adhesive. Beware of certain stain resistant treatments; some of which may contain potentially irritating chemicals for allergy sufferers. It is not all bad news especially for people with a distinct preference for a 100% wool carpet; a natural surface sheered from the fleece of sheep. Bonus: Wool is also a fire retardant surface!

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If all of the above raises an eyebrow, ask for the material safety data sheet (msds) for any surface you are considering. Test the material. How? Ask for a sample of the surface, preferably one small enough to fit into a small sized sealed jar; place the sample within the jar in direct sunlight for a few days. After a few days, open the jar. Take a sniff. If it reeks, there is some probability that it may cause issues. You should contact an HVAC company for an indoor air quality audit. The American Council for Accredited Certification is an association, which certifies individuals who are fully qualified to inspect your home for indoor air quality and environmental issues including chemicals, mold and microbial contamination.



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