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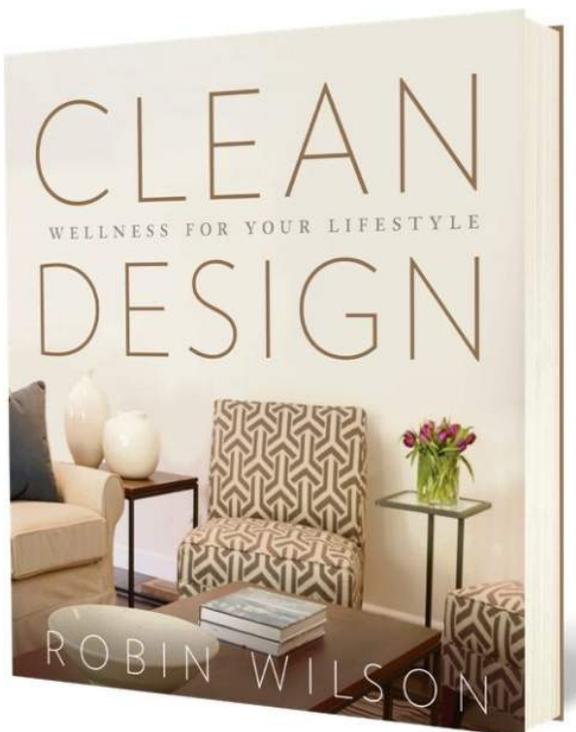
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## **Design Direction: Consider health issues when choosing decor**

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RACHEL WEAVER | Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016, 8:55 p.m.

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*Greenleaf*

“Clean Design: Wellness For Your Lifestyle” (Greenleaf, \$22.95) by Robin

## Wilson

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As a long sufferer of asthma and allergies, Robin Wilson is committed to finding design solutions that increase indoor air quality and create comfortable living spaces for all.

Wilson, author of “Clean Design: Wellness for Your Lifestyle” (Greenleaf, \$22.95), offers ideas and inspiration for creating less toxic living environments without sacrificing style.

Wilson is the mother of a toddler and an ambassador to the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America. Her lifestyle brand, Robin Wilson Home, is based in New York City.

Question: Describe your design philosophy.

Answer: Classic with a modern touch. I believe design should be timeless, yet also reflect modernity with technology, eco-friendly materials and, certainly, function.

Q: Do you think more people are starting to think about how their homes can affect their health?

A: One hundred percent. The Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America reports that 60 million Americans suffer from asthma or allergies or both. That's one in five people. Someone you know is personally affected. And it's very common to have no symptoms when you're outside, then when you're inside, you're wheezing and sneezing, or vice versa.

Your home should be your sanctuary. People need to know what's going into their homes. Clean the dust off your walls and floors. Make sure there is no formaldehyde-based glues in your furniture. The key is not to be neurotic, but to be aware.

Q: What are some of the best ways to start creating a less toxic living environment?

A: Change your day-to-day practices. Take off your shoes and carry them upstairs. Leave your outdoor coat in a closet. Open windows and turn on the ventilator when you take a shower. When you're cooking, turn on a ventilating fan. If you use a chemical to clean, open the windows afterward for 10 minutes. Change your bedding weekly.

Q: Some might hear the phrase “Clean Design” and assume that means a sterile, institution-like environment. What would you say to refute that?

A: Clean design is simply a lifestyle change. You can have beautiful furnishings. It's not minimalism — it's an awareness. Make sure the items you put in your space are cleanable, durable, non-toxic and eco-friendly.

For example, if you have an antique church pew in your home, that's eco-friendly. You saved it from a landfill. It will last another 50 years. It's a heritage piece you can pass

on to future generations.

Q: Any final thoughts on clean design?

A: Think about playrooms and nurseries. Think about what's at the child's eye level. If you clean your bathtub with a chemical and they're right there, they're breathing that in more than you.

If you're suffering from an illness, think about how hard your body is working to get well and what you can do to help it. (Clean design) doesn't mean getting rid of pets; it means cleaning after them. I call my book "The Joy of Cooking" but for the home — you're not cooking everything at one time. Do one thing at a time.

*Rachel Weaver is a Tribune-Review contributing writer.*

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