

breathe easier

KIDS

tips for creating a healthier home for kids



3M is proud to be
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American Lung
Association Health
House® program



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This booklet is a publication of 3M ————— and the American Lung Association Health House® program.



3M and the American Lung Association Health House® program are partnering to educate consumers about ways they can improve home air quality. 3M is a founding partner of the American Lung Association Health House program.

The goal of the American Lung Association Health House program is to raise the standard for healthier home environments. This is accomplished through national demonstration homes; consumer, builder, and site inspector training programs; and educational partnerships and alliances. Health House demonstration homes are designed with an emphasis on improving air quality and are built with special considerations for the indoor and outdoor environment. Filtrete™ Filters from 3M are used in Health House national demonstration sites.

3M and the American Lung Association Health House program do not intend for any of the tips in this booklet to be construed as medical advice or serve as a substitute for medical treatment or consultation. The American Lung Association Health House program does not endorse products.

We all want our children to be safe and healthy. That's why parents use safety latches on bathroom and kitchen cabinets, install gates on staircases and plug unused electrical outlets with plastic covers. But how many parents think about the dangers that high levels of indoor air pollution can pose to a child's health and well-being?

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Americans spend over 90 percent of their time indoors. The EPA also reports that indoor air pollution is one of the top five most urgent environmental risks to public health. In fact, the level of air pollution inside a home can be two to five times higher — and as much as 100 times higher — than outdoors!

It's hard to imagine, but the air we breathe indoors is filled with pollutants and allergens from the gases in your kitchen, to the chemicals stashed under the bathroom sink, to dander from the family pet.

Indoor air pollution can be harmful to everyone. However, because a child's respiratory system is still developing, he or she is more affected by indoor air contaminants than an adult. Also, children have a higher respiration rate than adults, especially when engaging in vigorous activity.

The good news is that there are many simple changes families can make to their home environment that can reduce indoor air pollution. By following the tips outlined in this booklet, you can improve the air quality in your home for yourself and your children.

improve indoor air



Reduce Everyday Indoor Allergens

The air we breathe contains many small unseen particles, such as pollen, mold spores, pet dander, smoke, and soot.

Allergens, especially those containing biological matter — such as house dust mites, animal dander, and molds — are known to aggravate allergies and asthma. Allergic reactions often worsen the symptoms of asthma, colds, and other respiratory conditions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Twenty percent of children with allergic asthma are sensitive to molds.

DID YOU KNOW?

Cat dander may be found on the walls and ceilings months, or even years, after the animal has left the house.

Hey Pet Lovers!

It's hard to keep your kitty or pooch out of the bedroom, but it is recommended since pet dander (tiny flakes of animal skin) are leading allergens. Be sure to wash pet bedding every week and if possible, shampoo dogs and cats weekly. The best pets for children with pet allergies are those without fur or feathers.

There are many steps you can take to help reduce these particles. One is to consider using a high-efficiency vacuum filter system.

No Smoking Please!

Children who live with smokers inhale many pollutants in secondhand tobacco smoke. Don't smoke indoors or allow anyone else to do so, especially where children are present.

Dust Mites...

Furry toys are a favorite of children AND dust mites. Make sure to buy washable toys and wash them frequently in hot water to kill dust mites.

Mattresses and bedding are another haven for dust mites. Use allergen-control covers on all pillows, mattresses, futons, and sofas. Bedding should be washed every week in water that is at least 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

Mold can grow in damp mattresses so check them often, especially if your child wets the bed. Using a waterproof mattress pad will help keep moisture away from the mattress.

Since window coverings attract dust and dust mites, replace blinds with washable curtains or use window shades made of plastic, wood, or other washable materials that can be cleaned easily.

DID YOU KNOW?

The average double mattress hosts up to two million dust mites.

DID YOU KNOW?

Asthma accounts for 14 million lost school days annually. It is the leading cause of school absenteeism attributed to chronic conditions.



keep informed



DID YOU KNOW?

A buildup of CO levels can be caused by malfunctioning appliances, using a non-electric space heater in an enclosed area, a clogged chimney or vent in a gas stove, furnace or fireplace, or by running a car in an attached garage.

Combustion Pollutants

Combustion pollutants are gases or particles that come from burning fuels such as natural gas, oil or wood. Combustion pollutants that may be present in homes are carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). Furnaces and other combustion appliances, such as gas stoves, gas clothes dryers, and fireplaces can be sources of indoor pollutants, especially if they are not properly vented or routinely serviced. Exposure to combustion pollutants can lead to illnesses, allergies, disabilities, and in extreme cases, death.

Appliances that burn gas, oil, wood, kerosene, and propane produce carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide poisoning can be life-threatening if left untreated. Install a carbon monoxide detector on each level of your home, particularly near bedrooms. Test your alarms once a month and replace them every two to five years.

Make sure that all appliances, including your furnace, hot water heater, and gas range are regularly serviced and vented to the outside (not to the attic or basement).

Dangerous Gases

Any home can have radon, which is not an allergen, but can cause lung cancer. Every home should be tested to see if radon is present. Test kits are available in hardware stores. If radon is present in the home, adding special ventilation can remove it.

DID YOU KNOW?

Next to smoking, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer.

Control Moisture NOW!

There are many sources of moisture in your home, including floods, leaking roofs, humidifiers, plumbing leaks, clothes dryers that are not vented outdoors, and damp basements.

Keep basements and crawl spaces as dry as possible. Check for leaky pipes and repair them.

Inspect the attic, basement, and exterior of your house during heavy rains to detect leaks.

In kitchens and bathrooms, install an exhaust or high-capacity fan that is vented to the outdoors.

Keeping humidity low (below 50%) can reduce the presence of mold and dust mites.

think about it



DID YOU KNOW?

Using a high-efficiency air filter, such as a Filtrete™ Filter from 3M, in your central heating or air conditioning system can reduce particulate levels in your home. Filtrete high-efficiency filters contain electrostatically charged fibers that capture up to 30 times more smoke, pet dander, and other pollutants than typical fiberglass filters.

Check Household Furnishings

Many furnishings contain formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can produce airborne chemical emissions. If you are sensitive to formaldehyde, avoid furniture made from medium-density fiberboard or particleboard — choose solid wood instead.

Don't use furniture (cribs, old chairs, antique bureaus) that have been stored in damp or moldy spaces.

When choosing carpeting, consider short nap (fiber length) for easier cleaning. Also, ask the installer to unroll the carpet and let it air out for a few days prior to installation.

Ventilation: Let Your House Breathe

One of the most effective ways to reduce indoor allergens is to improve ventilation. Ventilation provides a fresh source of outdoor air into the home and dilutes indoor air pollutants.

When outdoor temperatures soar, use your air conditioner. By keeping windows and doors closed and air conditioning on, you can help reduce the entry of pollens and other outdoor allergens into the home, as well as reduce the moisture in your home. Using high-efficiency air filters, such as Filtrete™ Filters from 3M, can help improve indoor air quality.

Change your furnace and air conditioner filter every two or three months.

If you use a fireplace in the winter, be certain that the flues and vents are regularly maintained to reduce back drafts and chimney fires in the home. Also, avoid ventless fireplaces.



breathe easier



Use Household Chemicals and Other Products Carefully

Cleaning products are among the most toxic substances kept in our homes. These chemicals can be found in a number of household products, including furniture waxes and polishes, drain cleaners, oven cleaners, and dishwashing powders to name a few. If not used properly, the harmful components in many household products can cause dizziness, allergic reactions, and even death. Store these products where children cannot reach them. Make sure you use them in an area with adequate ventilation and encourage children to go outdoors or play in other areas of the home.

Try to minimize use of household aerosol sprays and replace them with products sold in a liquid or solid form. If painting indoors, choose low emitting paints, open windows and use window fans to ensure proper ventilation.



Beauty products can aggravate allergies or asthma in children. Many of the ingredients added to products that dye, bleach, or straighten your hair are particularly toxic. Chemicals found in astringents, perfume, nail polish, and nail polish remover can also be allergenic, so when using these types of products, make sure you are in a properly ventilated room.

Avoid using perfumed detergents and liquid fabric softeners around allergic asthmatics. If possible, remove plastic bags from dry cleaned clothes and let them air outside for a couple of hours.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mixing chlorine and ammonia can produce life-threatening toxic fumes. Always check the labels of your cleaning products carefully.

more helpful tips

FOR ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION
ON AIR QUALITY
AND RELATED
ISSUES, VISIT:

www.lungusa.org
www.healthhouse.org
www.filtrete.com

For more helpful tips on improving the air quality in your home, the American Lung Association Health House program and 3M offer two additional booklets: *Tips for Creating a Healthier Home* and *Tips for Healthier Home Remodeling*.

Both booklets can be obtained free-of-charge by:

Sending an e-mail with your name and address to:
3mfiltrete@3mservice.montagenet.com

Or calling 1-800-388-3458.

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