

Is the Air in Your Home Making You Sick?

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The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that indoor air pollution is a major health risk. Indoor air pollutants can accumulate at 2 to 100 times higher concentrations than outdoor pollution. Since the average person spends 90% of their time indoors – at home, work or school, and commuting to and from – it is no wonder that medical costs related to indoor air quality are much greater than the costs of illnesses related to outdoor pollutants.

We are familiar with biologic pollutants in our homes like bacteria, viruses, mold, mildew, dust mites, pet dander and pollen. What is often not recognized are the microscopic dust particulates containing toxic metals such as lead and mercury, volatile organic compounds (VOC's) and other gases such as carbon monoxide and radon. Paints, plastics, pesticides, insecticides, glues, coatings, fire-retardants in cloth, furniture and carpeting, soaps, perfumes, lubricants, and even air-fresheners, can contain volatile compounds that continually "out-gas" into the air.

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs through the natural decay of radium and uranium in soils world-wide. Nearly 1 out of every 15 homes in the U.S. is estimated to have elevated radon levels. Both radium and uranium are very common elements present in Arizona soils and rock. Depending on how houses are built and ventilated, radon may accumulate in basements, seep into dwellings through cracks in foundations, floors, construction joints, walls, gaps around service pipes, and in water supplies. Studies show a distinct link between breathing high concentrations of radon and incidences of lung cancer. According to the EPA, radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer, responsible for 21,000 deaths in the U.S. each year.

Sick Building Syndrome is a term that was first coined back in the 70's, as buildings began to be constructed with tighter seals on doors and windows for increased energy efficiency. Improper ventilation, flaws in heating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, and a lack of fresh air intake and filtration, are listed as primary causes of sick building syndrome. While you may not experience an immediate reaction to these substances, they build up in the body and contribute to chronic illness over time.

Things you can do to improve the quality of your indoor air environment, should begin with consulting an HVAC professional to make sure your heat and A/C ventilation systems are working properly. Use high quality HEPA filters, and clean or change them once per month. Use carbon monoxide detectors within your home, especially if you have a natural gas fueled stove, water-heater and other appliances, fireplace or wood burning stove, or use any unvented kerosene or gas space-heaters.

Choose to cool the house with an evaporative "swamp" cooler, instead of air conditioning. Evaporative coolers push cooled outdoor air inside, which dilutes indoor radon levels, and can offset the air-pressure differences that typically bring radon into a home from the soil below.

See the Arizona Radiation Regulatory Agency (ARRA) website for additional information and how to test for radon levels in your home.

Keep the dirt and dust outside by using heavy duty door mats. Invest in a strong, good-quality vacuum equipped with a HEPA grade filter. Vacuum and mop at least twice per week using non-toxic cleaning products. Microfiber mops and dust cloths capture more dust and dirt than traditional fibers and don't require any special cleaning solutions.

Having a variety of decorative house plants, like Philodendrons, English ivy, Spider plant and others, can help to naturally filter your indoor air. All plants absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, but there are many plants that eliminate significant amounts of toxic substances such as benzene, formaldehyde, toluene, and trichloroethylene.

We all ingest toxins through the air we breath, food we eat, water we drink and bathe in. Our bodies are burdened with some level of toxicity today, and as I teach through my FIGHT For Your Health Program, daily "internal" detoxification is vital in achieving and maintaining optimal health. My "Power Drink" that includes ZeoGold, Bio'Energy C and Best of Organic Greens, is a simple, and inexpensive way to help your body detoxify.

For more information about the FIGHT For Your Health Program, please visit the Gordon Research Institute website at www.gordonresearch.com.

Sincerely,
Dr. Garry F. Gordon, MD, DO, MD(H)

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