



Checklist for a Healthy Home: **Indoor Air Quality**

Your health and well-being can be highly influenced by our surrounding environment, which creates all the more reason to strive for a healthy environment. Big improvements come in small steps – You can start improving yourself and/or your family’s lives today by taking steps to create a healthy home environment.

Take the steps towards creating a healthy home environment by beginning with the checklist below, helping to improve the indoor air quality in your home.

Keep your indoor air clean – Ventilate your home!

The quality of the air in your home is often more polluted than the air outside as it is such a contained environment. Keep your indoor air much cleaner by ventilating your home. It is a good idea to keep your windows open whenever the weather permits to allow the flow of air through your home. Maintaining a good humidity level is also key – get a quality humidifier for the winter and a dehumidifier for the summer.

Be smoke-free!

Smoking inside the home can leave us especially vulnerable to dangerous health effects and associated risks, not only for the smoker, but for others living and visiting the home – leaving them subject to health risks including secondhand smoke. Improve the health of yourself and your family by not smoking. At least, do not smoke in your home or car – take it outside away from others in an open area. You’ll notice the air quality in your home improve, therefore improving your health.

Use non-toxic cleaning products -- Green cleaning works!

Oftentimes, the cleaning products we use in our homes contain many toxic ingredients, some of which are not even always listed on the labels. Check your cleaning products for toxic ingredients and make notice of the warning labels. If you must use chemicals in your home, always be sure to use products to manufacturer specifications and use them in well-ventilated areas.

Want something better? Use natural cleaning products that are chemical-free. You may be surprised at how well natural, green cleaning products work. Even common household products like baking soda, vinegar, and citrus juices often have the power to clean as well or better than their chemical counterparts. Try some alternatives to chemical-laden products when you clean your home! -- Just visit www.womenforahealthyenvironment.org and look under the “Greening Tips” section of the “Green Resources” tab.

Using green cleaning products will help keep our bodies, our air, and our water clean.

Leave your shoes at the door.

Our shoes come into contact with many materials and substances during our daily walks in life – materials and substances we may not want tracked through our homes coming into further contact with ourselves, our families, and our pets. Wiping shoes on a welcome mat and/or removing shoes at the door can be a big step towards creating a healthier home as it helps in leaving oil, pollen, dust, and other unwanted materials at the door.

Use a HEPA-filter vacuum.

Children and pets spend a lot of time on the floor, so it is important that floors are kept as clean and safe as possible. Household dust can contain contaminants such as lead and fire retardants. Get rid of more of that dust and dirt by using a HEPA-filter vacuum, which has the capability to sweep up the widest range of particles and get rid of allergens that we could otherwise be breathing in.

Be aware and repair leaks.

Leaks left unattended and unrepaired create moisture that can lead to mold and mildew build up in our homes – something we definitely don't want as mold and mildew can potentially cause health effects such as allergic symptoms and reactions, asthma episodes, infections, and other respiratory problems.

Sources:

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"Some Basic Facts About Mold and Mildew." Rhode Island Department of Health, 2010. Web. <<http://www.health.ri.gov/environment/risk/mold.php>>.