

Indoor Air Quality

If the air in your home is polluted, it can cause serious health problems. These can show up shortly after exposure or much later. The good news is that you can fix indoor air — and reduce your risk. This fact sheet will help you understand and control common indoor air problems.

Problems you may notice right away



Irritation of eyes, nose, or throat



Dizziness or tiredness



Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath

These often get better soon if you take away the cause

Problems that may show up much later



Lung problems



Heart problems



Cancer

Even if you don't notice an air quality problem, it's worth checking for unseen problems

See below for common causes of poor air quality in the rooms of your home — and things you can do. See the next page for more ideas on how to improve air quality in your home. Check the things you can do.

Bedroom. Dust mites, pet dander and pet hair. These especially cause asthma and allergy attacks.

What to do:

- Wash bedding and other fabrics weekly
- Dust with a damp cloth and vacuum often
- Keep pets out of sleeping areas

Living room. Pet dander and pet hair, secondhand smoke, carbon monoxide from fireplaces.

What to do:

- Make your home a smoke-free zone
- Do not burn wood in your home
- Dust with a damp cloth and vacuum often



Bathroom. Mold caused by humid air. This especially makes asthma worse.

What to do:

- Clean up mold
- Fix water leaks
- Install a fan to control moisture and slow mold growth

Kitchen. Appliances that leak gas. Chemicals like cleaning products and pesticides.

What to do:

- Make sure appliances are installed correctly
- Use chemical-free cleaning and pest controls
- Vent appliances to outdoors
- Keep pests away by cleaning counters and mopping often

Basement. Air leaks, moisture, chemicals. Heating, cooling and other appliances can cause gas leaks.

What to do:

- Test for radon
- Install a carbon monoxide (CO) monitor
- Vent appliances to outdoors
- Store chemicals properly

Everyday Fixes

Reduce asthma and allergy triggers



Make your home smoke-free. Don't let anyone smoke. Don't burn wood.



Create a safe sleep zone — free of pets, stuffed animals, extra blankets, etc.



Vacuum, dust, and wash bedding often.



Clean up mold and mildew, fix leaks, replace shower curtain.

Reduce chemical fumes

These can cause long-term health problems



Avoid scented products like perfumes and candles



Use "green" cleaning products — and don't mix products



Store paints, chemicals, and pesticides safely



Use "zero VOC" or "no VOC" paint

Reduce harmful gases

These can cause emergencies or long-term health problems



Put a carbon monoxide (CO) detector on every floor of your home



When weather permits, open windows and doors — especially when painting, sanding, or using chemicals

Home Improvement Fixes

These fixes may require a bit more planning — but you can still fix them. Fixing them can prevent short-term and long-term health problems for you and your family



Increase airflow

- Install kitchen and bathroom fans that send air outside. This can help dry the air and prevent mold and mildew.
- Make sure fireplaces and wood stoves vent air outside.
- Make sure stoves, heaters, and other gas appliances vent air outside.



Use air cleaners

- Change the filters on heaters and air conditioners regularly.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- If you have asthma or allergies, consider buying an air filtering system.



Buy safe products

- When buying new furniture, carpets, or mattresses, look for products that are formaldehyde-free. Products should also have low-VOC or no-VOC finishes.



Find causes

- Test for radon.** Radon can cause lung cancer. Testing is easy and cheap — and problems can be fixed. To learn how, ask for the Intermountain fact sheet about Radon.
- Have heaters and appliances checked for leaks. Fix problems.

For more information. The information in this fact sheet is adapted from the EPA Indoor Air Quality website. For more information, go to www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq. If someone in your home has asthma, go to www.neefusa.org/health/asthma.

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