



Inventory to Improve Indoor Air Quality in your Home

Please answer the following questions to assess indoor air quality in your home

1. When was your home or apartment built? Most homes built before 1978 contain lead based paint. Lead in paint chips, dust, and soil gets on children's hands and toys which they may put in their mouths. Lead can make children very sick and cause permanent brain and nerve damage, learning difficulties, and behavior problems.
2. Do you have a regular cleaning schedule, and do you purchase or make your own non-toxic cleaning products?
3. Do you allow smoking in your home?
4. What procedures do you have in your home to minimize asthma and allergy triggers such as dust, mold, cockroaches, and mice?
5. Do you regularly change the air filter on your HVAC system, and is it a high quality, pleated filter?
6. Do you have other air filtration devices? HEPA filters can greatly reduce indoor air contaminants, but be wary of ionizing units that produce ozone. Ozone reduces your sense of smell and is a federally regulated pollutant in outside air due to its ability to impair breathing and trigger asthma attacks.
7. Do you have mats in front of your doors and in high traffic areas to reduce the amount of dirt entering your home?
8. How often are your floors swept, mopped, or vacuumed?
9. Have you inspected roofs, ceilings, walls, floors, carpet and plumbing for signs of leakage and/or standing water?
10. Check your temperature and humidity levels. Humidity should be between 33-55%, while temperature should be between 60-78 degrees Fahrenheit.

Ideas to improve the indoor air quality of your home

Ideas that are free or nearly free

1. If your home or apartment building was built before 1978, follow lead paint safety guidelines or encourage your landlord and/or contractors to do so. To order copies of the Lead Paint Safety Field Guide, contact the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-5323 or download the guide from the HUD Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control Web Site at www.hud.gov/offices/lead.
2. Non-toxic cleaning products can often be made with products you already have in



Inventory to Improve Indoor Air Quality in your Home

These include baking soda, vinegar, and lemon juice! For a guide to making your own non-toxic cleaning products, visit <http://www.ecocycle.org/hazwaste/recipes.cfm>.

3. Designate an outside area, away from doors, windows, and air intakes for your HVAC system for smoking, and do not allow it inside your home. If you smoke, consider quitting.
4. To minimize allergy and asthma triggers from pests like cockroaches and mice, keep food tightly sealed, and allow eating only in certain areas. Clean those areas daily.
5. When you dust, wipe down surfaces with a damp cloth to keep the dust down. Mop regularly.
6. Carpets hold a lot of dust and can also hold moisture. If you have carpet, be sure to clean up spills immediately and get the area very dry to reduce the possibility of mold growth. If you have hardwood floors underneath the carpet, consider removing it completely.
7. Pets, including cats, dogs, birds, and reptiles, are often allergy and asthma triggers. If you have pets that are a trigger for a member of your family, consider finding another home for the pet.
8. Eliminate “dust catchers” from your rooms. These include upholstered furniture, fabric curtains, and stuffed animals.
9. Plants can purify some toxins from the air, but also can hold a lot of dust, and if overwatered, mold. Dust your plants regularly and don’t overwater. Remove plants from rooms where sensitive individuals spend a lot of time, especially the bedroom.
10. Eliminate plug-ins and other artificially scented air fresheners from your home.

Ideas \$25 or less

1. Purchase “walk-off” mats or rugs for inside your doorways that can be washed in hot water (to eliminate dust mites). Cotton rugs without rubber backing are a good choice. Non-slip pads can be placed under the mats and washed separately in cool water. Wash the mats regularly. Also purchase a durable mat to place outside, in



Inventory to Improve Indoor Air Quality in your Home

front of your doorways. Organic and all-natural mats are becoming more readily available.

2. Wash bedding at least weekly in hot water to eliminate dust mites. Cold water washes designed to eliminate dust mites can also be found in online stores.
3. Natural air fresheners can be made by purchasing essential oils and adding 10-15 drops to a spray bottle filled with water. Be sure to purchase true essential oils, as many scented oils are made from petroleum products and therefore are not good for your indoor air quality. Essential oils can be found online and in most health stores. Lavender, mint, lemon, and orange are among the natural essential oil scents that can be purchased.
4. Purchase a high quality, pleated filter for your HVAC system and replace it every three months. If you are concerned about high levels of dust in your HVAC system, read “Should you have the ductwork in your home cleaned?” online at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/airduct.html>.
5. Check your temperature and humidity levels. Hygrometers (humidity) and thermometers (temperature) can be purchased for less than \$25 each. High temperatures and humidity levels can lead to mold growth.
6. Deal with mold and moisture immediately by eliminating leaks into your home. Leaks can often be quite inexpensive to fix, but if mold growth is allowed to occur, the clean up can quickly become expensive. For a complete guide to dealing with mold and moisture in your home, see “Mold and Moisture in Your Home” at <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html>.

Ideas over \$25

1. Purchase “walk-off” mats or rugs for inside your doorways that can be washed in hot water (to eliminate dust mites). Cotton rugs without rubber backing are a good choice. Non-slip pads can be placed under the mats and washed separately in cool water. Wash the mats regularly. Also purchase a durable mat to place outside, in front of your doorways. Organic and all-natural mats are becoming more readily available.



Inventory to Improve Indoor Air Quality in your Home

2. Wash bedding at least weekly in hot water to eliminate dust mites. Cold water washes designed to eliminate dust mites can also be found in online stores.

3. Natural air fresheners can be made by purchasing essential oils and adding 10-15 drops to a spray bottle filled with water. Be sure to purchase true essential oils, as many scented oils are made from petroleum products and therefore are not good for your indoor air quality. Essential oils can be found online and in most health stores. Lavender, mint, lemon, and orange are among the natural essential oil scents that can be purchased.

4. Purchase a high quality, pleated filter for your HVAC system and replace it every three months. If you are concerned about high levels of dust in your HVAC system, read “Should you have the ductwork in your home cleaned?” online at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/airduct.html>.

5. Check your temperature and humidity levels. Hygrometers (humidity) and thermometers (temperature) can be purchased for less than \$25 each. High temperatures and humidity levels can lead to mold growth.

6. Deal with mold and moisture immediately by eliminating leaks into your home. Leaks can often be quite inexpensive to fix, but if mold growth is allowed to occur, the clean up can quickly become expensive. For a complete guide to dealing with mold and moisture in your home, see “Mold and Moisture in Your Home” at <http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html>.