



Healthy Air in Your Home

Potential air quality hazards you and your family face and how to stay healthy

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Keeping the air in your home healthy

Some air quality concerns in the home include lead dust particles, radon exposure, fumes from household products, and carbon monoxide accumulation.

Lead dust

Lead was popularly used in paints until 1978. Young children are at risk of ingesting or inhaling lead paint dust. Regular exposure can cause reading and learning problems as well as other developmental delays. Larger doses can cause high blood pressure, anemia, and kidney and reproductive disorders. Keep an eye out for chipping or peeling paint and clean up paint chips immediately. If your home was built before 1978, lead paint is a concern. However, lead paint in good condition may not pose a hazard.

Radon exposure

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas. Radon levels are known to be especially high in the midwest; however, it has been

detected across the all of the United States. Exposure to radon can increase the risk of lung cancer especially when combined with smoking. Radon leaks into homes via basements, crawl spaces, and well water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website has a list of local radon detection programs organized by state which can be utilized to find out if your home is at risk.

Fumes from household products

Some common household products, like paints, aerosol sprays, moth repellents, air fresheners, pesticides, cleaners, and disinfectants, can pose health serious risks. Effects from prolonged inhalation of these products include eye, nose, and throat irritation; dizziness, loss of coordination or headaches; and nausea. Some of these products are also associated with liver, central nervous system damage, and cancer. Use these products in well-ventilated areas and choose to those which have packaging designed to avoid spills and leaks. When buying these products, try to avoid the following chemicals:



- ◆ petroleum distillates
- ◆ mineral spirits
- ◆ chlorinated solvents
- ◆ carbon tetrachloride
- ◆ methylene chloride
- ◆ trichloroethane
- ◆ toluene
- ◆ formaldehyde

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Carbon monoxide accumulation

Carbon monoxide is a chemical which belongs to the larger category of combustion pollutants. Combustion pollutants result from the burning of fuels such as natural gas, wood, propane, kerosene, oil, and coal. Carbon monoxide is an odorless gas which can be fatal in high concentrations. Combustion pollutants can enter the home through any heating appliance that burns fuel (furnaces, boilers, water heaters, stoves, fireplaces, etc). Potentially harmful buildup occurs when there is improper ventilation or exhaust systems in the home. Never leave lawn mowers or cars running in closed garages. Since carbon monoxide is odorless, consider installing a carbon monoxide detector which can be found at most local retailers in the home goods department.