



What are you Breathing?

By U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7

Most of us spend much of our time indoors. The air that we breathe in our homes can put us at risk for health problems. Some pollutants can be chemicals, gases, and living organisms like mold and pests.

Understanding and controlling some of the common pollutants found in homes may help improve your indoor air and reduce your family's risk of health concerns related to indoor air quality.

Learn about pollutants and take action to improve air quality in your home

Asthma triggers are commonly found in homes and include *mold, dust mites, secondhand smoke, and pet dander*. A home may have *mold* growing in the shower, *dust mites* in pillows, blankets or stuffed animals, *secondhand smoke* in the air, and *cat and dog hairs* on the carpet or floors.

TAKE ACTION:

- Dust and clean your home regularly.
- Wash sheets and blankets weekly in hot water.
- Keep pets out of the bedroom and off soft furniture.
- Control pests — close up cracks and crevices and seal leaks; don't leave food out.

Molds are living things that produce spores. Molds produce spores that float in the air, land on damp surfaces, and grow. Inhaling or touching molds can cause hay fever-type symptoms and can also trigger asthma attacks.

TAKE ACTION:

- The key to mold control is moisture control.
- If mold is a problem in your home, you should clean up the mold promptly and fix the water problem.

Secondhand Smoke comes from burning tobacco products such as cigarettes, pipes, and cigars. Children are especially sensitive to secondhand smoke, which can trigger asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

TAKE ACTION:

- Do not smoke or allow others to smoke inside your home or car.

Combustion Pollutants are gases or particles that come from burning materials. In homes, the major source of combustion pollutants are improperly vented or unvented fuel-burning appliances.

TAKE ACTION:

- Use appliances that vent to the outside whenever possible.
- Ensure that all fuel-burning appliances are properly installed, used, adjusted, and maintained.

Is the air in your home HEALTHY?



Some pollutants in the air in your home are especially harmful for children, elderly people, and those with health problems.



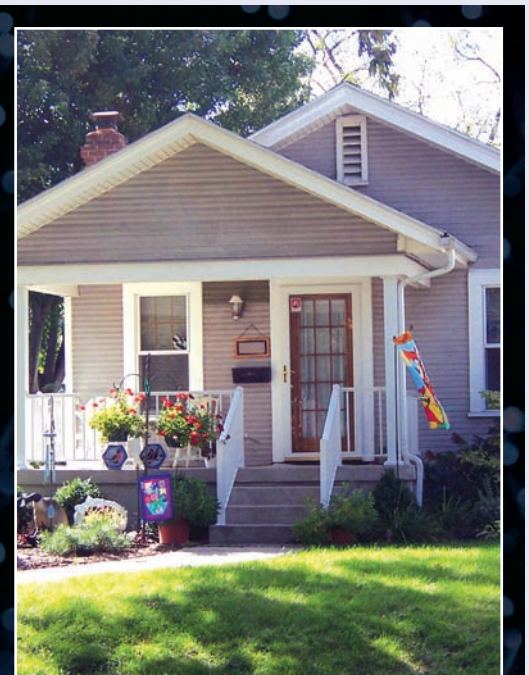
There are resources available to help you learn whether the air in your home is healthy.



Contact Children's Mercy Hospital to get information about managing your child's asthma; receive information on safe and healthy homes, or to receive a healthy homes assessment:
CALL 816-855-1895



Contact the Kansas City, Missouri Health Department to have your child tested for lead poisoning and for more information about resources to rid your home of lead hazards:
CALL 816-513-6048



Important Tips That Will Help Control Indoor Pollutants:

- **Test for radon and fix if there is a problem**
- **Reduce asthma triggers such as dust mites, pet dander and molds**
- **Do not let people smoke indoors**
- **Keep all areas clean and dry — Clean up any mold and get rid of excess water or moisture**
- **Always ventilate when using products that can release pollutants into the air; if products must be stored following use, make sure to close tightly**
- **Inspect fuel-burning appliances regularly for leaks, and make repairs when necessary**
- **Install a carbon monoxide alarm**

For more information, contact the EPA:
CALL 800-223-0425
or visit the EPA website:
www.epa.gov/iaq
www.epa.gov/region07/citizens/healthy_homes.htm

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are chemicals found in paints, cleaning supplies, varnishes and waxes, pesticides, moth repellents, air fresheners, and dry-cleaned clothing.

TAKE ACTION:

- Never mix household products unless directed to do so on the label.
- Keep all products away from children!

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