



Indoor Air Quality

FAST FACTS:



- On average, Americans spend 90% of time indoors. Indoor levels of air pollutants may be two to five times higher, and occasionally more than 100 times higher, than outdoor levels.
- Typical household items can create problems for air quality. For example, older carpets can be breeding grounds for biological pollutants. Space heaters can produce carbon monoxide. Even artificial air fresheners have the potential to release unhealthy organic gases.
- Indoor sources of air pollutants include combustion (stove), building materials and furniture, household cleaners, paints, volatile organic compounds (VOC's) in common materials, mold, dust and pets.
- Outdoor sources of pollution for indoor air quality include pesticides, pollen, exhaust, and radon.
- In the 1990's the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated that nearly one out of every 15 homes had radon concentrations above the EPA recommended action level. The NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) states that Hudson County has a low potential for radon.
- Side effects of air pollution include indoor contaminants that have been linked to allergies, asthma attacks, respiratory illness and sometimes cancer.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:



You can help! We can work together to improve indoor air quality for the health of our families and pets.

1. **Lights out.** Tobacco smoke can be one of the most toxic things for a living space. Don't smoke indoors.
2. **Test your home for carbon monoxide.** Purchase a carbon monoxide detector, keep batteries fresh, and regularly test it.
3. **Leave the dirt outside.** Use a heavy doormat to collect dirt and debris from entering living space.
4. **Avoid VOCs in paints, window and floor coverings, and furniture.** Consider purchasing materials and furniture with low or no Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC).
5. **Consider using hard window coverings,** such as blinds rather than curtains.
6. **Consider using hard flooring surfaces** instead of carpets, such as hard wood floors, tile, and laminate floor coverings.
7. **Clean the floors.** Sweep, mop and vacuum floors regularly.
8. **Circulate the air naturally.** Circulate new air often. Open a few windows and doors and let outside air circulate. Try not to turn on the air conditioner, which could also be a source of allergens and pollutants.
9. **Filter the air.** Use HEPA rated air filters. Plant indoor potted plants known to filter pollutants like formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, and benzene.
10. **Keep a healthy level of humidity** (30-50%) to reduce likelihood of mold and mildew growth.
11. **Use fragrance free or naturally scented products.** Many candles, laundry detergents, household cleaning products, and scented fragrances emit VOCs.
12. **Use exhaust fans** when cooking to filter air pollutants from the stove.
13. **Regularly replace filters** in your air conditioning and heating systems.
14. **Wash and groom your pets** more often during winter months.

LEARN MORE:

US EPA Improving Indoor Air Quality <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/improving-indoor-air-quality>

US Green Building Council How to Improve Air Quality <http://www.usgbc.org/articles/how-improve-air-quality>

House plants for clean air <http://www.cleanairgardening.com/houseplants/>