

American Lung Association Health House Program and 3M Issue Summer ``Repair Your Air`` Advisory

"Millions of Americans are breathing unhealthy amounts of ozone, dust, pollen and other harmful irritants and allergens, especially during the summer months," said Neil Schachter, M.D., professor of pulmonary medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, author of "Life and Breath," and past president of the American Lung Association of the City of New York. "It's important for the American public to take active measures to help clean the air inside their homes so people are able to breathe easier."

In today's energy-efficient, airtight homes smoke, soot, pollen, pet dander and other particles can become trapped without proper ventilation. These particles, some of which are more than 300 times smaller than a human hair, can trigger or aggravate many serious breathing and health problems, including allergies, asthma, bronchitis and respiratory disease.

Here are some simple, practical tips to help "repair" the air in your home this summer, courtesy of the American Lung Association Health House program and 3M:

Air filtration can help reduce indoor air pollution from airborne particles in your home. Choose air cleaning filters that meet American Lung Association Health House indoor air quality guidelines, such as Filtrete -ultra allergen reduction filters from 3M, and replace these filters during the first week of every new season. -Homeowners living with pets, smokers, and allergy and asthma sufferers may need to replace these filters more frequently. Don't forget that the only safe way to protect against secondhand smoke inside is to not let anyone smoke in your home.

High humidity is a problem in much of the United States during the summer months. The ideal range for indoor humidity is 30 to 60 percent, depending on your location, season and your physician's -recommendation. Consider purchasing a hygrometer (an instrument that measures humidity) and installing a -mechanical ventilation system, exhaust fans and a dehumidification system. Can't afford to go that far?

Running your bathroom and kitchen fans more often will help remove hot humid air from the house.

Running your air conditioner will help dehumidify the outside air coming in.

Summer foliage is in full bloom this time of year, and the shade provided by trees gives natural cover from -the hot sun. Because tree roots can channel surface water toward your basement and can lead to mold -growth, you should keep trees and shrubs at least three feet from the perimeter of your home.

- Window coverings are a great way to keep the hot summer sun from heating up your home. Make sure that -your window coverings do not become a magnet for dust, especially if someone in your household has dust -allergies or asthma. Use window coverings made of washable fabric.

The American Lung Association Health House program and 3M are offering a series of "Breathe Easier" brochures that provide additional tips on improving air quality in the home. These three brochures -- Breathe Easier: Home, Breathe Easier: Remodeling and Breathe Easier: Kids -- are available free-of-charge by calling 1-800-388-3458 or by sending an e-mail with name, mailing address and the title(s) of booklets requested

to 3Mfiltrete@3Mservice.montagenet.com. The booklets can also be downloaded at www.filtrete.com.

For more information on indoor air quality and how to reduce levels of air pollution in the home, visit www.healthhouse.org or www.lungusa.org. To download free Post-It(R) Software Notes to remind you when you want to change your air cleaning filter, visit www.filtrete.com and click on "Reminder Service."(3)

The American Lung Association has been fighting lung disease for nearly 100 years through programs of education, advocacy and research and has long been a leader in the clean air movement. The American Lung Association Health House program, a national education program, is raising the standard for healthier home environments through its national demonstration homes, training programs for consumers and builders and educational partnerships and alliances. For more information about the Health House program, call 1-877-521-1491 or visit www.healthhouse.org. For more information about the American Lung Association's other programs and services, visit www.lungusa.org. 3M provides support to the American Lung Association Health House program for its ongoing efforts to generate awareness and educate people about indoor air quality issues. The American Lung Association and its Health House program do not endorse products.

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(1) According to the American Lung Association's State of the Air: 2003 report, nearly half of the population of the United States are living in counties with an unhealthy amount of ozone, the primary ingredient in the smog that regularly blankets many urban areas during the summer months.

(2) Yet according to a 2002 survey commissioned by the American Lung Association Health House program and 3M, less than 20 percent of Americans realize that the air inside their homes may be more polluted than the air outdoors.

(3) According to a 2002 survey commissioned by the American Lung Association Health House program and 3M, nearly ten percent of Americans have never changed the filter in their heating/air conditioning unit!

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