

American Lung Association Health House Program And 3M Issue Fall ``Repair Your Air`` Advisory

When levels of air pollution inside the home can be high. People can participate in this effort by prohibiting smoking in the home, changing their home's air filter and performing other simple tasks starting the week of September 23 -- the first day of fall.

"The considerable health risks associated with common household pollutants and allergens may have been overlooked in the past by the general public," said Neil Schachter, M.D., professor of pulmonary medicine at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, and past president of the American Lung Association of the City of New York. "Making homes airtight and energy efficient may increase health risks -- especially for young children, the elderly and the estimated 42 million Americans who suffer from asthma and hay fever symptoms."

The potential health risks may be greatest in newer, more energy-efficient homes -- many of which are built so airtight that indoor humidity rises and molds grow, and allergens and other particles -- such as dust and pet dander -- become trapped and cannot escape. These tiny 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 asthma, bronchitis, respiratory allergies and disease.

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

- Air filtration can help reduce pollution from airborne particles inside the 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.
- Mold spores exist everywhere, so to prevent mold growth, remove the moisture that allows mold to grow. If your house has problems with mold in the cooler months, consider adding ventilation to reduce the moisture built up indoors from your daily activities. Fixing leaks and running the bathroom exhaust fan will help, but you may need even more.
- Consider switching from a wood-burning fireplace to a vented gas fireplace, which produces less indoor pollution. Check flues and chimneys for blockage and cracks that allow fumes to enter the house. Make sure the chimney has a good draft up the flue and is clear of debris.
- Make sure all fuel-burning appliances, such as the furnace, hot water heater and gas range, are examined annually by a professional.

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 also can be downloaded at

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) note reminder software that will notify you when it's time to change your air cleaning filter, visit filtrete.com and click on "Reminder Service."(2)

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 EPA: (a) indoor air pollution is one of the five most urgent environmental threats to public health; (b) the level of air pollution inside a home can be two to five times higher -- and occasionally up to 100 times higher -- than outdoors!

(2) According to the National Center for Health Statistics Raw Data from the National Health Interview Survey, 2001 (analysis by the American Lung Association), 48 million Americans suffer from asthma and hay fever.

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