

# Americans Wrongly Assume Indoor Air is Less Polluted than Outdoor Air

Filtrete Brand Partners with Dr. Roshini Raj to Make Americans Air Aware

Small changes can make a big difference when it comes to living a healthier life. Whether that's eating more vegetables, drinking more water or tracking the number of steps walked each day, people will go that extra mile to keep themselves and their families healthy.

However, a recent survey<sup>1</sup> commissioned by [Filtrete Brand](#) from [3M](#) revealed that while indoor air pollutants are ranked among the top five environmental risks to public health<sup>2</sup>, parents are not always aware of the steps they can take to make the air inside their homes cleaner for the families. The survey found that while 96 percent of parents regularly take steps to help protect their children within their homes, two in five parents (39 percent) don't include changing their home heating and cooling system's air filter as part of their healthy living habits.

"While we're going to great lengths to get into healthier routines and instill better habits in our families, we often overlook the things we can't see — like the air we breathe," said [Dr. Roshini Raj](#), attending physician and a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the NYU School of Medicine. "Most people are aware that outdoor air pollution can damage their health; however, many do not know that exposure to indoor air pollutants can cause immediate and long-term health effects, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)<sup>3</sup>. I've teamed up with Filtrete Brand because we need to make every breath count and take proactive steps to ensure we're breathing cleaner air at home."

The survey findings reveal that when it comes to living a healthier lifestyle, Americans need to be more air aware.

## The Dirt on Air Awareness

People take approximately 20,000 breaths a day, 900 breaths an hour and 15 breaths per minute, yet they don't stop to think about what is actually present in the air they breathe.

Half (50 percent) of the survey respondents believe the air inside their home is less polluted than outdoor air. The reality, however, is that indoor levels of pollutants may be two to five times higher than outdoor levels.<sup>4</sup>

While most people (91 percent) identified clean air as one of several essentials for healthy living, 76 percent admitted to regularly using items that contribute to poor indoor air quality. For instance:

Scented candles (52 percent) may mask odors but also release small soot particles into the air.<sup>5</sup>

Gas stoves (35 percent), without proper ventilation, may emit nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde into the air.<sup>6</sup>

Fireplaces (24 percent) emit harmful particles such as volatile organic compounds.

While dust mites generate some of the most common allergens that can trigger allergic reactions and asthma in many people<sup>7</sup>, individuals with indoor or outdoor allergies are more likely to take medication (76 percent) to combat allergy symptoms than change their air filters more frequently (43 percent) to proactively capture airborne allergens such as dust mite debris from the air passing through the filter in the home.

## Protective Parent Precautions

Parents pay close attention to their children's health and safety at home, at school and at play. While they busy themselves with the dangers they can see, they often neglect the hidden hazards they can't see.

People are likely to immediately replace items in the home such as spoiled milk (89 percent), expired food (79 percent) and expired medication (61 percent), yet two out of five people don't change their air filters the recommended four times annually (43 percent). When trying to protect their children from contact with bacteria and viruses, parents are more concerned about their kids wearing dirty clothes (69 percent), picking their noses (59 percent) and flushing public toilets with their hands (54 percent) than they are about them breathing polluted air (44 percent).

## Clean Up Your Act

Though many Americans understand the importance of breathing clean air, their routines and behaviors do not reflect healthy home habits.

Nearly all people (94 percent) know that changing the air filter in heating/cooling systems is essential for a clean, healthy home.

However, nearly half (47 percent) change their filters infrequently, less than four times annually.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, air filters should be changed every three months<sup>8</sup>. However, 54 percent of people incorrectly think that if their home air filter looks clean, they don't need to change it.

When preparing for houseguests, Americans typically wash bed linens and towels (72 percent), declutter and complete repairs (69 percent) and perform deep cleaning on the home (62 percent), but far fewer change the air filter in the home (23 percent).

Give your family a breath of fresh air by using [Filtrete Healthy Living Filters](#) that effectively attract and capture at least 90 percent of large airborne particles such as dust, pollen and mold spores, while also attracting and capturing microscopic particles that can carry bacteria and viruses. Filtrete Healthy Living Filters are designed with exclusive Filtrete Brand 3-in-1 technology from 3M that pulls in and traps unwanted particles while letting cleaner air flow through. Checking your filter monthly and changing it at least quarterly will help

improve your indoor air quality while also helping your home heating and cooling system run more efficiently.

#### About 3M

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#### About Dr. Raj

[Dr. Roshini Raj](#) is a board certified gastroenterologist and internist with a medical degree from New York University School of Medicine and an undergraduate degree from Harvard College, with a special interest in women's health. She is an attending physician at NYU Medical Center/Tisch Hospital and a Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the NYU School of Medicine. Dr. Raj is the author of "What the Yuck?! The Freaky & Fabulous Truth About Your Body" and co-founder of TULA, a healthy-living brand designed to help users achieve true balance in life. She resides in New York City with her husband and two children.

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<sup>1</sup> The survey was conducted by Wakefield Research ([www.wakefieldresearch.com](http://www.wakefieldresearch.com)) among 1,000 U.S. adults ages 18+ with household forced-air heating or cooling systems that require filters, between January 9<sup>th</sup> and January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, using an email invitation and online survey.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/region1/communities/indoorair.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.epa.gov/iaq/ia-intro.html#Pollution\\_and\\_Health](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/ia-intro.html#Pollution_and_Health)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.epa.gov/region1/communities/indoorair.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://nepis.epa.gov/Adobe/PDF/P1009D5G.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home/The-Inside-Story-A-Guide-to-Indoor-Air-Quality/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.lung.org/healthy-air/home/resources/dust-mites-and-dust.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/d0cf6618525a9efb85257359003fb69d/12442b82bfbd8047852575b4005722bd!OpenDocument>

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