Tips for better, cleaner air

Clean air is important, especially if you're one of the 50 million Americans who have allergies. Here are a few easy yet helpful ways to keep air fresh indoors.

Be wary of the "3 M's"—moisture, mold and mildew

If water is leaking in the kitchen, bathroom, basement or other areas, repair the leaks as soon as possible. Then remove any mold or mildew.

Air out kitchen fumes

Breakfast might smell delicious while it's cooking. But the entire house shouldn't smell like it at dinner time. If your stove's vent hood doesn't vent directly outside, try opening a window while cooking. A small fan can help create a draft and move fumes toward the opening.

Control critters

Bugs and critters should be removed when they get in the house. Sweep and vacuum often so dead bugs don't contribute to the dust and other matter in the air. Be sure to remove cardboard and other paper packaging from your house as soon as possible. Insects—especially roaches—love to eat the glue and live between sheets of cardboard.

Vacuum vents

Air conditioners, purifiers, fans and other equipment that cleans and moves air will eventually clog with dust. Make a habit of vacuuming them and replacing air filters (HEPA filters are very effective). Also, try keeping vents clear of furniture and other obstacles to help them operate at their best.

Try an air purifier

If you're in an office, home office or smaller room most of the day, consider bringing in an air purifier equipped with HEPA filters. They come in a variety of sizes depending on the amount of space you want to treat. You can place purifiers in a few rooms throughout the house (at least one on each floor level).

Although allergies and asthma can't be prevented, you can do a lot to reduce the chance of an allergic reaction or asthma flare-up. Keeping the air as clean as possible is always a good tactic whether you're at home or work.

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