

EWG'S TOP TIPS FOR BETTER AIR QUALITY



WHY PAY ATTENTION TO AIR QUALITY?

Airborne pollutants are an important contributor to all respiratory diseases, including asthma attacks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that more than 6 million American children have asthma, and air pollution is also harmful to the heart, circulation, and even brain health. Children are more vulnerable to air contaminants compared to adults, so watch out for these common problems:

TRAFFIC POLLUTION

MOLD AND MILDEW

SECONDHAND SMOKE


OFF-GASSING FROM NEW FURNITURE, CARPETS, PRESSED-WOOD PRODUCTS, AND PAINT

DUST MITES AND HOUSEHOLD PESTS

CLEANING CHEMICALS AND SOME PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS SUCH AS NAIL POLISH


CLEAN SAFELY

Americans spend up to 90 percent of their time indoors, where allergens and irritants can prompt asthma attacks. Keeping homes and schools clean is important – yet some cleaning products and practices can worsen air quality.



Vacuum carpet and soft furniture often to control pet hair and dust. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.

Keep hard surfaces clean by using safer cleaners – consult EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning,



Don't use air fresheners or scented cleaning products.

Wet mop floors frequently or use microfibers cloths that grab dust – sweeping can kick up dust that simply resettles on surfaces.

Leave shoes at the door to prevent tracking in outside dirt and pollutants.

<http://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners>, to find good options.

USE LOW-VOC PRODUCTS FOR CHILDREN'S ROOMS

Changing the air filter in your HVAC system regularly will remove some dust particles, but filters won't stop air pollutants known as Volatile Organic Compounds, or VOCs, from accumulating in indoor air. This includes cancer-causing formaldehyde and other chemicals that off-gas from paint and furniture. Purchase low-VOC products for children's rooms and, ideally, the entire home.

Choose solid wood furniture. For pressed wood products, look for products made without formaldehyde glues – and ask the manufacturers if this information is not listed on the label.

When shopping for low-VOC paint, check the labels and inquire with the manufacturers to make sure these paints do not contain harmful ingredients such as glycol ethers and formaldehyde-emitting preservatives. **Consider purchasing certified paints, such as Green Seal-11 certified paint that has performance criteria for low-VOCs.**

CONSIDER OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY

Environmental exposures like road dust, car exhaust, smoke and factory emissions are especially harmful for children. Check the Air Quality Index on your local weather report or online before kids with asthma engage in vigorous outdoor activity. In addition to air pollution, temperature extremes or increased pollen may also trigger asthma attacks.

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