

## The Importance of Clean Air

It is shocking to know that a large number of American homes are more polluted than the air out of doors. It has now become a prime concern for the Environment Protection Agency (the EPA) It has become a major environmental problem with the US homes. The EPA has estimated that the air inside the offices and homes in the United States are two to five times more polluted than the air out of doors. Due to this rising rates of pollution, there has been an enormous 60% rise in the number of asthma cases in the past 20 years.

Most homes contain a huge number of respiratory irritants like mildew, mold, tobacco smoke and dust mites. Elements like pollen, gases from wood products, animal dander, radon and formaldehyde pollute indoor air further. Most homes have poor ventilation and a high moisture content, which aggravates the condition further. Inhaling such polluted air creates severe problems especially headaches, asthma, allergies and uneasiness in the upper respiratory tract. Prolonged exposure can also lead to deadly diseases like cancer.

Old homes provide ample scope for molds and mildew to breed. Homes that have been newly built have high efficiency windows that allow less of fresh air to enter and this contributes to decrease the quality of indoor air. Floodwater and torrential rains have often inundated homes. This raises the level of pollution because the amount of moisture has risen drastically.

The main factors

The main components that contribute to reducing the quality of indoor air are:

- Tobacco smoke- tobacco fumes are harmful for all ages. But for young children the risk is more, as their lungs are still tender and developing. A passive smoker runs the risk of lower respiratory tract infections like pneumonia and bronchitis. They can also have ear infections, frequent and severe attacks of asthma and reduced functioning of the lung.

- Wood burning stoves and indoor fireplaces- these can also trigger of several kinds of allergies and its symptoms. Other appliances that burn fuel are water heaters, gas ranges, oil furnaces, and space heaters significantly raise indoor pollution thereby giving rise to asthma and its symptoms.

- Mold- it is a fungus that survives in moisture laden conditions and feed on organic substances. They cause allergies and release harmful chemicals like mycotoxins. The only way to control their growth is by reducing the indoor moisture content. It is a good idea to immediately repair leaky pipes and remove absorbent tiles and carpets.

- Dust mites are found mostly in fabric upholstery and because they are unable to drink water they breed in places where there is more moisture. If the indoor humidity is kept below 50% dust mites will not survive.

As you have now come to know the causes of the problems, you will definitely be able to handle them accordingly.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

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