



January 2024

Environmental Message

Winter Indoor Air Quality

Whether it's the snow and ice in the north or torrential rain in the south, people across the nation will be generally spending more time indoors as these storms roar across the nation. And when that winter weather comes homeowners search out and seal any source of cold drafty air entering the home. By sealing out the cold air we effectively seal in the indoor air, raising the concentration of allergens and pollutants inside the home. The common sources of pollution come from: combustion sources, building materials and furnishings, household cleaning products, hobby or home improvement activities, outside sources (radon, pollen, lead, etc...) and pets. These pollutants can come in the form of: mold and mildew, pet dander, dust mites, pollen, biological pollutants, environmental tobacco, formaldehyde, various VOC's, asbestos, carbon monoxide, and lead.

There can be immediate health effects of poor indoor air quality such as headaches, dizziness, fatigue, and itchy eyes, nose and throat. People with asthma and chemical sensitivities are also at risk of increased exposure to indoor air pollution, which can trigger breathing attacks.

Symptoms of poor indoor air quality may lead to a chronic sensitivity over time. Serious health effects from indoor air pollution may include respiratory disease, heart disease and cancer.

The Environmental Protection Agency recommends three strategies to combat indoor air pollution: source control, ventilation and air purification. Here are some tips to combat poor indoor air quality: regular cleaning, replacing furnace filters regularly, testing for radon, utilizing a carbon monoxide detector near sources of combustion, using non-toxic cleaning products, keep bedding clean, air out and clean mold prone areas, consider purchasing an air purifier, spending time outside and opening windows when you can.

The first step of combating indoor air pollutants is knowing the source and how to control them. Wintertime increases our exposure to indoor air pollutants due to more time spent inside and the decrease in ventilation. We should be thinking about indoor air quality year-round, but particularly vigilant during wintertime.

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