

Tips for a Healthier Home

There is more to keeping a clean home than cleaning surfaces like counters and carpeting. A really clean home starts by cleaning the air your family breathes. And the airborne particles you can see are only a small fraction of the allergens that may be in the air in your home. Many particles are invisible to the naked eye and can lurk in the air for long periods of time.

According to the American Society of Heating and Air Conditioning Engineers, 99% of particles in a typical atmosphere are between 0.3 and 1 micron in size. That's extremely small when you consider that a human hair is about 50 microns. And if you're like most people, you spend as much as 90% of your time indoors.

If you have a forced-air heating or cooling system, a Filtrete[®] air filter can help reduce these microparticles from the air as it passes through the filter. That's because Filtrete[®] filters are electrostatically* charged to attract and capture more particles than ordinary fiberglass filters.

In addition to using a Filtrete[®] filter and changing it regularly, here are some more tips to help improve the quality of the air in your home.

- ⊕ **If you have pets, bathe and groom them often.** Minimize their access to carpeted areas and bedrooms of anyone in the house with sensitivity to pet dander. Pet dander (minute scales of animal skin) can aggravate allergies and asthma.
- ⊕ **Fabric window coverings are like magnets for dust.** Use window shades made of plastic, wood or other washable materials for easy cleaning.
- ⊕ **Mold can be found in the soil of houseplants, so check them often.** If mold growth is evident, the plants may need to be re-potted or kept outdoors.
- ⊕ **Prohibit smoking in the home.** Homes with one or more smokers often have particle levels several times higher than outdoor levels.
- ⊕ **Place allergen-resistant covers over mattresses and pillows.** Feather pillows and down comforters are not recommended for individuals with sensitivity to feathers or down materials. Bedding should be washed every week, in water that is at least 130 degrees Fahrenheit (hot setting).
- ⊕ **Reduce indoor humidity to less than 50 percent.** This may vary from region to region so be sure to consult with your personal physician for an appropriate recommendation. This level will help reduce — and potentially eliminate — mold growth and dust mites. However, if humidity levels are too low, viruses and bacteria in the home can spread more easily or aggravate respiratory issues.
- ⊕ **Never store more than a few pieces of firewood indoors.** Drying green firewood inside your home can introduce airborne particles into your entire house.
- ⊕ **Keep trees and shrubs at least 3 feet away from the perimeter of your home.** Tree and shrub roots can give surface water an easy route into a basement, which can lead to mold growth.
- ⊕ **Remember that a little common sense goes a long way.** Regularly clean places where allergy-causing mold is likely to grow or dust mites might accumulate, including the kitchen, bathroom and basement.

* Electrostatically charged filters are most effective when the filter is clean and new.