



800.564.1846 www.steamaticofsacramento.com

INDOOR AIR QUALITY:

Creating the Total Envelope—Indoor Environment

In homes across America, the quality of indoor air can be worse than outdoor air. Creating a safe haven, or total envelope, in your home supports you and your family's health in important ways.

Indoor Air Quality Self-test:

- Have you ever stopped to think about whether the air you're breathing at home is healthy?
- Do you frequently have headaches or feel nauseous or tired in your home?
- Do you feel better when you leave the house?
- If you have these symptoms, or others listed here, your home's air quality may be the problem.

Signs of Possible Home

Indoor Air Quality Problems

Be alert for these signs:

- Unusual and noticeable odors, stale or stuffy air
- Noticeable lack of air movement
- Dirty or faulty central heating or air conditioning equipment
- Damaged flue pipes or chimneys
- Unvented combustion air sources for fossil fuel appliances
- Excessive humidity
- Tightly constructed or remodeled home
- Presence of molds and mildew
- Health reaction after remodeling, weatherizing, using new furniture, use of household or hobby products, or moving into a new home
- Feeling noticeably healthier outside the home

Get informed. Request more information by contacting suggested resources. Learn how to create a total envelope indoor environment.

As significant as other indoor air quality concerns are, asthma is reaching epidemic proportions in American children today. In June 2006, it was reported that Asthma afflicts about 20 million Americans, including 6.3 million children. Since 1980, the biggest growth in asthma cases has been in children under five. In 2000 there were nearly 2 million emergency room visits and nearly half a million



hospitalizations due to asthma, at a cost of almost \$2 billion, and causing 14 million school days missed each year.

Asthma is a disease that causes the airways of the lungs to tighten. An asthma attack is when lungs aren't getting enough air to breathe. You or your child might be having an asthma attack if you/she/he experience-

- Trouble breathing
- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Chest pain
- Chest tightness

Indoor air quality is a significant trigger and contributor to asthma and other health issues.

Indoor pollution sources that release gases or particles into the air are the primary cause of indoor air quality problems in homes. Inadequate ventilation can increase indoor pollutant levels as well as high temperature and humidity levels.

There are many sources of indoor air pollution in any home. Indoor air factors include: combustion sources such as oil, gas, kerosene, coal, wood, tobacco products; building materials and furnishings; products for household cleaning and maintenance, personal care, or hobbies; heating and cooling systems; and outdoor sources such as radon, pesticides, and outdoor air pollution.

If too little outdoor air enters a home, pollutants can build up, posing health and comfort problems. Weather conditions can drastically reduce the amount of outdoor air that enters a home; pollutants can build up even in homes that are normally considered "leaky."



Possible Air Quality Issues in Your Home:

Mold

Mold grows on damp things such as shower curtains, bath items, tubs, basins and tiles.

What you can do?

If you see mold, clean it up with soap and water.

Use exhaust fans or open a window in the bathroom when showering and the kitchen when cooking or washing dishes.

Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water as soon as possible.

Dry damp or wet items within 1-2 days to avoid mold growth.

Dust Mites

Dust mites are tiny bugs you can't see. They live in sheets, blankets, pillows, mattresses, soft furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys, such as stuffed animals.

What you can do?

Wash bed sheets and blankets once a week. Dry completely.

Use dust-proof covers on pillows and mattresses.

Vacuum carpets, rugs and furniture often.

Wash stuffed toys. Dry completely.

Secondhand Smoke

Asthma can be triggered by the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, or the smoke breathed out by a smoker. Choose not to smoke in your home or car, and don't allow others to do so either.

What you can do?

Don't smoke in your home or car.

Don't let anyone smoke near your child.

Pledge to make your home and car smoke-free.

Cockroaches

Cockroach body parts and droppings may trigger asthma attacks.

What you can do?

Keep counters, sinks, tables, and floors clean.

Clean dishes, crumbs, and spills.

Store food in airtight containers.

Cover trashcans.



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Cats and Dogs

A warm-blooded animal's urine and saliva may also trigger attacks.

What you can do?

Keep pets outside if possible.

If you have a pet inside, keep them out of the bedroom and off the furniture.

Vacuum carpets and furniture often.

Nitrogen Dioxide

Nitrogen dioxide is an odorless gas that can irritate your eyes, nose, and throat and may cause shortness of breath. This gas can come from the use of appliances that burn fuels, such as gas, wood, and kerosene.

What you can do?

If possible, use fuel-burning appliances that are vented outside.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to use appliances.

Chemical Irritants

Chemical irritants found in some products in your house, such as scented or unscented products, including cleaners, paints, adhesives, pesticides, cosmetics, or air fresheners, may make your child's asthma worse.

What you can do?

Use these products less often and make sure your child is not around when you use the products. Also, consider trying different products.

Take great care to follow the instructions on the label. If you use these products, try to make sure that windows or doors are open and that you use an exhaust fan.

Learn More:

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/>

<http://www.montana.edu/wwwcxair/>

www.noattacks.org

Request a Healthy Home Inspection

Steamatic of Sacramento offers complete healthy Home Inspections to evaluate your indoor air quality.

Call 800.564.1846 for details.