



Indoor Air Quality & Asthma

People on average take 21,600 breaths per day and with 80% of people's time spent indoors, the quality of the air we breathe is very important, especially for those suffering from a chronic lung disease. A variety of harmful contaminants including carbon monoxide, radon, mildew, molds, formaldehyde, asbestos, lead, secondhand smoke, allergens, and chemicals all mix together in homes to create polluted air.

Research shows that taking steps to improving your indoor air quality improves the quality of life of children with asthma by decreasing trips to the emergency room, missing fewer school days and experiencing fewer asthma symptoms.

Try your luck at True and False questions to determine the quality of your home's air.

Questions

1. *True or False:* Newer homes contain fewer harmful pollutants as older homes.
2. *True or False:* Radon and carbon monoxide are both invisible, odorless, tasteless gases that pose health threats to your home.
3. *True or False:* Some contaminants, such as radon, increase your chance of getting lung cancer.
4. *True or False:* Allergens including mold spores and ragweed only affect outdoor air.
5. *True or False:* Secondhand smoke is just as harmful as smoking – especially around children with asthma.
6. *True or False:* There is nothing I can do about the mold and mildew in my basement.
7. *True or False:* Filters on appliances should be changed every at least every three months.
8. *True or False:* The cleaning products I use do not affect the air I breathe.
9. *True or False:* Do not store chemicals in your home including harmful cleaning products, paints, and varnishes.
10. *True or False:* Dust mites are so small that they do not affect the air you breathe.

Answers

1. *False:* Newer homes pose just as many air quality threats as an older home due to construction materials, off gases, and improperly installed appliances and ventilation systems.
2. *True:* Every home should have [carbon monoxide](#) detector that it is placed near the furnace, stove and oven. Using a carbon monoxide that detects low levels will provide the best protection for your home.
3. *True:* Exposure to radon over time can increase your chance of getting lung cancer. Get your home tested properly ventilated to reduce the amount of radon in your home.
4. *False:* Mold spores and ragweed are brought into your home through open windows, on shoes and clothes, and ventilation systems. See your doctor if you struggle with seasonal allergies.

5. *True:* If you are a smoker or someone in your household smokes the best way to protect your family is to quit smoking or make the commitment to *Take it Outside*. Cigarette smoke lingers on clothing and hands; if you have small children make sure to wash your hand or change your clothes before holding them.
6. *False:* Many basements have mold and mildew problems due to too much moisture. Find out how moisture is getting in and fix the problem, then use a dehumidifier to excess moisture.
7. *True:* Changing filters at least every 3 months using a pleated electrostatic filter that is designed to catch small particles. Filters have 1-12 particle size rating system; the higher the number the better it will be at capturing smaller particles.
8. *False:* Use non-toxic, unscented household cleaning products, a HEPA vacuum, and wet dusting and mopping. Clean all furniture and floors regularly – and even more often if you have pets.
9. *True:* Chemicals in paints, varnishes, and harmful cleaning products should never be stored in the home. When using these products protect yourself by using protective masks and gloves.
10. *False:* Dust mites are microscopic bugs that live in beds and pillows and can cause problems for people with lung disease. Use dust mite covers on mattresses and pillows of children with asthma and people suffering from COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and lung cancer.

The Enhancing Asthma Care Project in Illinois is supported by Health Care Service Corporation's Healthy Kids, Healthy Families Initiative and lead by the American Lung Association in Greater Chicago. This joint initiative aims to work with 15 clinics that serve high-risk populations to improve pediatric asthma care to an estimated 30,000 children in Chicago.