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Fact Sheet

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Healthy Housing: Practical Tips for Your Home

How do I keep pollutants from "following me in" from outside?

- Wipe your feet on a doormat or remove your shoes at the door.
- Vacuum carpet and fabric-covered furniture often to reduce dust buildup.

How can I make the air in my home cleaner?

- Make your home a no-smoking zone.
- Ventilate your home often: Open your windows to let polluted air out and let clean air in.
- Check the air in your home: Test for radon and install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.
- Use an efficient air conditioner return filter.

How can I keep humidity low in my home?

- Repair leaky plumbing and seal cracks in basement floors and walls. Make sure wet areas are dry within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- Use exhaust fans or open windows when showering, cooking, or using the dishwasher.
- Clean and/or replace filters regularly.
- Maintain the humidity level between 30-60%.

How can I freshen rooms naturally?

- Clear pollutants from the air with potted plants and cut flowers.
- Sprinkle baking soda on your carpet to absorb odors before vacuuming.
- Use natural herbs and essential oils instead of scented candles or air fresheners.

Which products with strong fumes and toxic ingredients should I avoid?

- Avoid pesticides and chemical fertilizers in and around your home.
- Use non-toxic, mild, or less-toxic household cleaners.
- Limit the use of aerosol sprays, which can pollute the air with toxic solvents.
- Limit exposure to formaldehyde and other volatile organic compounds such as paints and lacquers, cleaning supplies, pesticides, building materials and furnishings, office equipment, correction fluids and carbonless copy paper, glues and adhesives, permanent markers, and pressed wood products.

How can I limit indoor burning of fuel and wood?

- For a clean-burning fire, burn only hardwoods, not pine or pressed wood logs.
- Clean the flue and chimney annually.
- Open a window or turn on the exhaust fan when using a gas stove.
- Avoid kerosene and gas space heaters.

DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality, Education and Outreach Section provides information on environmental topics. Readers are encouraged to reproduce this material. For more information about air quality issues, please call (803) 898-4123 or visit our Web site at www.scdhec.gov/baq. Please send written correspondence to: DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality, Education and Outreach Section, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

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