Air Cleaners and Your Health

Why do I need to clean the air in my home?
Many things in the air in your home may hurt your health:
- Pollen from the outside
- Dust
- Odors
- Lead
- Bacteria
- Mold spores
- Smoke
- Chemicals

Infants, young children, and people with lung disease will be more affected than others.

How do I keep the air in my home clean?
The best way to keep your indoor air clean is to keep pollutants out!
- Air out new items before you bring them into your home. This includes things like: vinyl products like shower curtains, furniture, carpet, dry cleaning.
- Clean with simple products like white vinegar, baking soda, oil soap and water.
- VOCs are the harmful gases that many products give off. If you must purchase a toxic product, buy low odor, low VOC, or no VOC and buy only the amount you expect to use.
- Open windows to reduce indoor pollution levels.
- Close your windows when outdoor air pollution levels are high.

Are there laws to protect my indoor air?
- No laws exist in Ohio for indoor air quality in the home.
- You must decide how to keep your indoor air "clean".

Before you buy an air cleaner try these things first:
- Vacuum with a HEPA filtered vacuum cleaner or use a micro-filtration or allergen vacuum bag.
- Vacuum twice a week in the bedroom and once a week in other areas, including cloth covered furniture
- Dust once a week.
- Wash sheets and blankets every week in hot water.
- Keep humidity levels under 50%.
- Replace the furnace filter regularly with a pleated filter.
- Look at other important steps at http://www.noattacks.org

Using an air cleaner will not cut down on the need to clean your home.

What kinds of air cleaners can I get for my home?

Healthy
- High efficiency particle air (HEPA) filter cleaners.
- Air filtering cleaners (Not as good).
**Not Healthy**

- Ionizers
- Air Purifiers that produce ozone.
- Filter cleaners (may be HEPA) with an ionizing or ozone generating feature.

*Ozone and ionizer air cleaners may be harmful to human health.*

**What is ozone?**

- Ozone is a common outdoor air pollutant during the warmer months.
- Outdoor ozone limits are set by the government and warnings are issued to the public when outdoor levels are high.
- Using an ozone generator indoors can cause ozone levels in the home that are higher than levels outdoors. Even higher than the box says.

**Can ozone and ion air purifiers clean the air in my home?**

**NO:** Consumer Reports has studied both and reports that air purifiers that make ozone do not remove:

- Dust, pollen or other particulates.
- Viruses, bacteria, mold, or other biological pollutants.
- Odor causing chemicals.

**Can ozone cause cancer?**

- Ozone in your home can combine with other chemicals in your home to form cancer causing chemicals. Some of these are:
  - The perfumes from plug in air fresheners.
  - Fumes from new furniture.

**Can ozone cause other health problems?**

- Ozone can worsen chronic lung diseases such as asthma and weaken the body's ability to fight respiratory infections.
- Ozone limits your sense of smell so you can not smell other odors any longer.

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**Be careful about what you buy—**

- Even “air purifiers” with seals of approval have been shown to have health risks.
- Many are ozone generators.

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**How do I choose the right air cleaner?**

- Measure the room where you will put the air cleaner.
- Multiply the length by the width to get the number of square feet in the room.
- Match the square feet in your room to the amount of space the air cleaner will clean.
- If you buy an air cleaner that is too small for your room it will not clean the air well.
- If possible buy an air cleaner with a HEPA filter.

**Internet Resources**


*Consumer Reports. Ionizing Air Cleaners, May 2005; www.consumerreports.org.*

*US Environmental Protection Agency, Residential Air Cleaning Devices: A summary of available information, 1990; www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/residair.html*