

Better Health through Better Building

FACT SHEET

Indoor Air Quality

- A recent survey released by the American Lung Association (ALA) estimates that 85% of Americans don't realize that the air in their homes may be a health hazard.
- According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), people spend as much as 90% of their time indoors.
- More than 40% of North American homes have at least one family member who suffers from allergies and asthma.
- Pollutants such as bacteria, molds, pollen and dust can be major factors contributing to days lost from work or school.
- Home building products can have a major impact on indoor air quality and your family's health.
- Indoor air quality is an issue both at home as well as in buildings and schools. The World Health Organization says that as many as 30% of new and remodelled buildings may have indoor air quality problems.
- The EPA recently rated indoor air pollution as one of the five most urgent environmental issues, accounting for over \$1 billion annually in direct health care costs.
- The EPA estimates that the air in most new homes is likely to be two to five times more polluted than the air outside.

Tips for a Healthier Home

- Reduce or remove as many asthma or allergy triggers from your home as possible; pay attention to dust and mites. Many problems can be prevented by ensuring surfaces are clean and preventing or eliminating sources of dampness, which can encourage growth of mold.
- Consider the building products used in your home, as many can emit harmful gases or particles. These should be kept to a minimum. Storage of chemicals and cleaning agents should also be limited to the garage whenever possible.
- Proper ventilation is key to good indoor air quality. Ensure that all ventilation systems, including vents, duct work, heating and cooling systems, air filters, etc. are cleaned and maintained regularly. The air can also be cleaned with systems like the HEPA (High Energy Particulate Air) air cleaning system, which removes airborne particles and common household allergens such as pet dander, pollen and mold.
- Insulation is one of the major building products that has a long term effect on the air you breathe. Icynene insulation is able to create an airtight seal in your home, without any harmful emissions. In tandem with proper ventilation it will control humidity and reduce growth of mold. It can also significantly improve energy efficiency, which improves indoor air quality by reducing the use of heating systems.