

Better Breathing

A publication of
Breathe California
of the Bay Area

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House Beautiful, House Breathable Conquering the five most common allergens in your home

Source: *YourLungHealth.org*

Most homes are full of air contaminants, including the five most common indoor allergens - dust mites, mold, animal dander, cigarette smoke and cockroaches. While it is impossible to completely eliminate them from your home, by making a few changes in your housekeeping routine you can greatly reduce their presence. Follow these ten tips and you'll be on your way to an allergy-free home.

1. Be aware of your allergy triggers. Even if you have never been medically diagnosed with allergies, knowing what allergens seem to trigger your symptoms can help you to prioritize your housecleaning routine.

2. Remove the carpet from your home, as carpet provides an ideal

living space for dust mites. While dust mites themselves are harmless, their excrement can trigger allergy symptoms. If it is impossible to remove the carpet in your home, make sure to vacuum it often.

3. Vacuum and dust your home frequently. This is especially true if you have carpet, but hardwood floors also need to be regularly cleaned to remove dust. If you yourself have asthma or are severely allergic to dust mites, let someone else do the vacuuming, as vacuuming can stir up dust that may exacerbate your allergies.

4. Be aware of each day's weather report about pollen and mold. If the pollen or mold count is high,

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SAVE THE DATE: Join us for the Breath of Life Walk



On Saturday, September 23rd, Breathe California will be hosting its annual *Breath of Life Walk*. The leisurely 5K walk and family event starts at 10 am and will be hosted at West Valley College in Saratoga. Form a team of friends, neighbors and family members and help us raise funds for the agency's local lung disease programs.

To learn how you can become involved in the *Breath of Life Walk*, give us a call at (408) 998-5865 or visit our walk website www.BreathofLifeWalk.org.

Make Sure the Air in Your Home is Clean

Recent studies have shown that the air inside your home is likely to be more polluted than the air outside. Common household items and conditions can lead to the creation of indoor air contaminants, which can be of particular concern to those living with a form of lung disease.

Fortunately, Breathe California offers a free Home Assessment Service to ensure your home is clean and healthy. We'll come in and help identify a number of indoor air contaminants that may be present in your home. We'll also help you develop a plan to help you eliminate these sources of air pollution and to make sure they don't return.

For more information, or to sign up for a free home assessment, contact Joseph Francis by calling (408) 998-5865, or sending an e-mail to joseph@lungsrus.org.

Allergens...

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make sure your windows are closed and that you run your air conditioner or dehumidifier to discourage mold from growing in your home.

5. Stop smoking. Smoke contributes to allergies and other respiratory conditions. If you have a child with asthma or allergies and feel that you are unable to stop smoking, make sure to avoid smoking in the house or in the presence of your child.

6. Consider giving away your pets if they are contributing to your allergies. If you are unable to take this emotionally difficult step, try to keep the pet outside as much as possible. At the very least do not let them into any bedrooms.

7. Create barriers between yourself and dust. Plastic or semi-permeable covers can be put on your couch, mattress and pillows to reduce the amount of dust that you are exposed to. You should also wash your bed sheets at least once a week in hot water to kill the dust mites in the sheets.

8. Immediately clean up any standing water that occurs as a result of spills or leaky faucets, as standing water can lead to mold proliferation.

9. On warm days, run your air conditioner or dehumidifier. This will decrease the relative humidity in your home, which is the easiest way to control mold proliferation and dust mite population, since dust mites cannot survive below a relative humidity of 50 percent.

10. Make your home unappealing to cockroaches by keeping your kitchen counters and microwave clean and free of uncovered food. Make sure to store dry foods – especially sugar and flour – in airtight containers. If you already have roaches, find a pest control company that uses a pesticide or pest control system that won't aggravate your allergies. Alternatively, try using boric acid in conjunction with poisoned roach bait to eliminate your roach population. Boric acid is toxic to insects but harmless to humans, and can be obtained for an inexpensive rate at most drugstores.

Is Secondhand Smoke Bothering You?

Is a neighbor's cigarette smoke drifting into your home? Are you worried about how secondhand smoke may be affecting you and your loved ones? According to a recent Surgeon General's report, secondhand smoke can pose a serious health threat to ALL individuals. Call Breathe California's Secondhand Smoke Helpline and we'll inform you about your rights and what you can do to protect yourself. Just call (408) 999-0500.



In the News

Each month we are proud to bring you some of the latest news affecting lung disease patients. You can also find more news briefs and articles online by visiting:

www.lungsrus.org

Click on the News link from the menu bar to reach our newsroom. From there, you can view individual articles by clicking on the "News Briefs" link.

From the Newsroom, you can also read about the agency's latest work in the community. Click on the "Agency News" link to view our latest articles and press releases.

Surgery Alternative Shows Promise for Lung Cancer Patients

Time, July 17, 2006

Time Magazine reports that a combination of radiation therapy and thermal ablation may offer a successful treatment for patients who do not qualify for surgery.

Radiation therapy is designed to destroy the cells around the tumor, while thermal ablation targets the center of the tumor through the use of heat. While surgery removes the tumor completely and is often the most successful treatment, it is not an option for patients whose cancer has reached more advanced stages.

Researchers from Rhode Island Hospital conducted a study involving 41 patients who had been diagnosed with lung cancer for more than seven years and received both radiation therapy and thermal ablation. The cancer did not spread in any of the patients and their survival rates increased, while their recurrence rates decreased.

While the procedure is still in its experimental stages, it may prove to be a viable alternative for those who are not good candidates for surgery.

Simple Blood Test May Detect Lung Cancer Before It's Too Late

News-Medical.Net, July 17, 2006

Researchers at the University of Kentucky have developed a blood test which may be able to diagnose non-small-cell lung cancer years before current testing methods. The test - which identifies a human immune response to tumors - correctly identified non-small-cell lung cancer in blood samples taken from patients long before they were diagnosed with the disease. During trials, the test had an astonishing 90% accuracy rate.

This test comes as particularly good news due to the specific nature of lung cancer and current detection methods. Lung cancer can be present in a patient for three to five years before it reaches the conventional size needed for radiographic detection methods like a CT scan or an X-ray. By this time, the cancer has often already become

very advanced; half of all patients with non-small cell lung cancer die within a year of their diagnosis.

Each year, 10 million people are diagnosed with lung cancer worldwide. Lung cancer is also the number one killer among all forms of cancer. Non-small-cell lung cancer is the most common form of lung cancer and only 40 percent of people diagnosed with the disease currently survive five or more years after their diagnosis.

The blood test has been licensed to private biotechnology company 20/20 GeneSystems. If further studies confirm the reliability of the test, it will become the first blood test for cancer since the prostate specific antigen test became available in the 1970s.

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Better Breathing
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Breathe California
of the Bay Area
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*As the Local Clean Air
and Healthy Lungs
People, Breathe
California of the Bay
Area fights lung
disease in all its
forms and works with
its communities to
protect lung health.*

Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

Thursday, September 7th, 11 am to 12 Noon – Gilroy
St. Louise Regional Hospital Board Room, 9400 No Name Uno
Speaker: Estelle Coleman
The Wide Variety of Breathe California Services Available to You!

Monday, September 11th, 1:30 to 3:00 – Palo Alto
Avenidas Senior Center, 450 Bryant St.
Speaker: Estelle Coleman
The Wide Variety of Breathe California Services Available to You!

Monday, September 25th, 1:30 to 3:00 – San Jose
Breathe California, 1469 Park Ave.
Speaker: Estelle Coleman
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A Look Ahead: Our October BBC Meetings

Palo Alto – Monday, October 9, 1:30 to 3 pm
San Jose – Monday, October 30, 1:30 to 3 pm

The Better Breathers Clubs meet at regular times and locations. Each month, Better Breathers Clubs meet on the 2nd Monday in Palo Alto and on the last Monday in San Jose. In addition, the Gilroy Club meets on the 1st Thursday quarterly.

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