

Better Breathing

A publication of
Breathe California
of the Bay Area

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Improving Indoor Air Quality in Your Home

Sources: *Green Planet, About.com*

Most people spend about 90 percent of their time indoors. When you spend that much time in your home, it is important to make sure that the air is as clean as possible. Breathe easier by improving your home’s air quality. Here are a few tips to help get you started:

1. **Don’t use aerosols** because they may cause complications in people suffering from respiratory disease. Instead use other products that do not disperse themselves into the air.
2. **Do dust and vacuum often**, at least three times a week. Use a damp cloth and wear a face mask to prevent from inhaling dust particles.
3. **Do clean vents regularly**, especially in the kitchen, bathroom and dryer, and make sure that they are in proper working condition.
4. **Do replace old carpets** because they generate a lot of dust. They also release fibers into the air as they wear. These fibers enter the home’s heating system where they burn on the surface of the furnace, releasing toxic gasses into the air you breathe.
5. **Do clean your humidifiers** at least once a week. Humidifiers with a water reservoir can cause mold or bacterial contamination.
6. **Do use exhaust fans when cooking**, especially when using cooking oil. When oil is heated, bubbles are formed and burst into the air releasing noxious molecules that cause respiratory irritation.

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Get your inhaler
FREE through
Breathe California!

See page 2 for details...



How to Get Your Inhaler for Free!

Breathe California is proud to announce that it will be offering vouchers for one free HFA inhaler!

The vouchers were donated by the Respiratory and Allergic Disease Foundation (in partnership with TEVA Specialty Pharmaceuticals) to help un-insured or under-insured patients switch over from the now-banned CFC inhalers.

You can download a short **voucher redemption form** from our Breathe California website at www.lungsrus.org. Bring your complete form along with a copy of your prescription to our office at 1469 Park Avenue in San Jose. Vouchers will be given out first-come, first-served while supplies last.

Improving Indoor –Air...

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7. **Do replace curtains with blinds** because curtains are major dust magnets. If possible, replace old curtains with plastic shades or blinds for easy cleaning.
8. **Don't allow smoking in your home.** If you have a guest that does smoke, ask them to step outside to your porch or yard.
9. **Don't use space heaters** because they produce nitrogen dioxide that not only cause

breathing difficulty, but can irritate your eyes, nose and throat. If you do use them make sure open a window.

10. **Do use environmentally friendly cleaners.** Some modern cleaners contain harsh chemicals that can cause irritation. Cleaning with baking soda or vinegar is always a useful alternative.

To learn more about maintaining a healthy home environment, call Breathe California at (408) 998-5865 and ask about our Home Assessment Program.

Meet This Month's Better Breathers Speakers Susan Milligan and Cathy Lynch of Pathways Hospice

This month we have two presenters from Pathways Hospice, Susan Milligan and Cathy Lynch.

Susan Milligan has been a Pathways Medical Social Worker for over 14 years. Prior to this she has worked in a variety of settings including a hospital, senior center and also in non-profit services for over 10 years.

She has had experience leading support groups and bereavement groups. Additionally, she has had personal experience in dealing with family illness issues. Susan will be presenting at this month's Palo Alto and South County BBC meetings.

Cathy Lynch has been working in Pathways' Community Relations Department for the last three years. Her 25 years professional experience in healthcare has made her an expert on community outreach. It has also made her highly knowledgeable about the delivery of care in Santa Clara.

She has had past experience with for profit and not-for-profit organizations including the San Jose Medical Group. She has also worked at Secure Horizons, where she presented Medicare benefits to small and large groups. Her focus is on educating the community about available health care services and solutions. Cathy will be presenting at this month's San Jose BBC meeting.

Join Susan and Cathy as they discuss their topic, **Care for the Caregivers.**

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.

The following news briefs have been summarized from external sources and have been placed here solely to inform you of the latest in lung health news. Breathe California does not endorse their findings nor have they verified their accuracy.

Allergy Season Gets Off to an Early Start

San Jose Mercury News, February 2, 2009

Despite the recent rain, Bay Area residents have been welcomed to an early start to the 2009 allergy season. According to local experts, pollen counts (particularly from cedar and juniper trees) were higher than usual in February, causing many residents to start suffering ahead of schedule.

Typically, rainfall during the winter washes away early pollens and allergens that cause common symptoms. But the warm, dry weather throughout most of the winter has triggered many residents' early sensitivity to allergens. And once this "priming" begins, the earlier

and more severe their symptoms are likely to appear.

"At the beginning of the season, it may take 30 pollen grains to cause a person trouble," said Dr. Theodore Chu of South Bay Allergy and Asthma Group. "But near the end of season, after their nose has been highly primed, it only takes three or four."

While storms in late February have likely helped relieve early allergy symptoms and washed away much of the pollen, a return to warmer weather is likely to further welcome allergy symptoms for Bay Area residents.

Heart Attacks Drop in Areas with Smoking Bans

Associated Press, December 31, 2008

According to a new report by government researchers, smoke-free laws can dramatically decrease the number of heart attacks experienced in the area. While secondhand smoke has long been known to pose a risk for heart disease, the study was the longest-running of its kind to demonstrate the effects of smoking bans on heart disease.

The study suggests that secondhand smoke may be a terrible and under-recognized cause of heart attack deaths in this country, said one of its authors, Terry Pechacek of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The study looked at heart attack hospitalization rates in Pueblo, Colorado during the three years after the city banned workplace smoking.

Researchers found a staggering 41 percent drop in cases while two neighboring areas that did not have bans experienced no such drop. However, critics note that no data was collected to determine whether the ban itself was responsible, since researchers did not measure secondhand smoke levels in Pueblo workplaces after the ban.

Nonetheless, the study lends further support for smoke-free laws across the country. While California has long had its own workplace smoking ban, many communities are taking steps to institute new protections in places like parks, public venues, building entrances and walkways.

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San Jose, CA 95126
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*As the local clean air
and lung health leader,
Breathe California of the
Bay Area fights lung
disease in all its forms
and works with its
communities to promote
lung health.*

Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

Tuesday, March 10th, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm – South County
De Paul Health Center Conference Room, 18550 De Paul Drive, Morgan Hill
Speaker: Susan Milligan, Medical Social Worker, Pathways Hospice
“Care for the Caregivers”

Monday, March 9th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Palo Alto
Avenidas Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street
Speaker: Susan Milligan, Medical Social Worker, Pathways Hospice
“Care for the Caregivers”

Monday, March 30th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – San Jose
Breathe California Offices, 1469 Park Avenue
Speaker: Cathy Lynch, Community Relations Coordinator, Pathways Hospice
“Care for the Caregivers”

A Look Ahead: Our April BBC Meetings

Palo Alto – Monday, April 13th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
San Jose – Monday, April 27th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

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