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REDUCE AIR QUALITY CONCERNS AND BREATHE EASY

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Poor air quality in the home may be one reason for respiratory illness and allergies.

"Indoor air quality concerns are often the result of high humidity levels and inadequate ventilation," says Mark Antonuk with ATCO EnergySense.

Indoor pollutants such as mould and dust affect our health. But many people don't realize furniture could also be part of the problem.

Many items, particularly furniture and building products, release gases as they age. These gases are by-products of the solvents and glues used in manufacturing.

The health effects vary depending upon your own sensitivities, the type of products and how much gas is trapped inside the home because of poor ventilation.

There are some things to keep in mind to keep the air -- and your family -- healthier.

High humidity creates an environment for mould. In general, it is due to inadequate ventilation which traps moisture, odours and other pollutants.

Mould growth can usually be eliminated by reducing humidity levels and cleaning infected spots with household bleach.

Newer homes which are well-sealed tend to have higher humidity levels.

Consider installing a mechanical ventilation system, such as a heat recovery ventilator, to reduce humidity, gases and therefore the potential for mould.

In older homes, lessen mould by installing and using exhaust fans when cooking and showering.

This should remove much of the moisture in the air.

Natural products rarely present a problem and many manufacturers are turning to more environmentally friendly solvents, varnishes, paints and glues.

Various groups promote green-building products that reduce environmental impact.

Dust and other particulates also contribute to poor indoor air quality.

People and pets are major contributors since most household dust is actually hair and skin particles.

Other dust sources are dirt brought in on footwear, through vent ducts, through open windows and

various cracks and openings in the home. Carpets, open shelves and upholstered furniture tend to trap dust.

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