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A FRESH HOME, A HAPPIER LIFE:

YOUR GUIDE TO A BALANCED HOME



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Abstract

A clean and balanced home is more than just visually appealing, it directly impacts your health, wellbeing, and overall happiness. This guide explores the connection between a tidy living space and mental clarity, explains your legal rights to a healthy environment, and provides practical tips for maintaining optimal indoor air quality. From natural solutions like air purifying plants to effective cleaning strategies for often overlooked areas such as blinds and window tracks, this PDF equips you with the knowledge to create a home that supports both comfort and health. By following these strategies, you can transform your home into a sanctuary that fosters balance, productivity, and peace of mind.

Getting Started

Creating a balanced and fresh home begins with understanding the fundamentals of cleanliness, air quality, and environmental health. Start by evaluating your current living space, identify areas that may accumulate dust, allergens, or mould. Learn about your rights to a safe, healthy environment and the importance of proper ventilation and indoor air quality. Next, gather simple tools and introduce natural solutions like air purifying plants to enhance your home's atmosphere. Finally, adopt practical cleaning routines for both visible and hidden spaces, ensuring your home is not only presentable but also contributes to your physical and mental wellbeing.

The Mental Health Benefits Of A Clean Home



“Cleaning your room is good for your health,” might sound like something your parents may have told you to get you to tidy up your toys as a kid, but turns out, there’s some truth to it. Our environment plays an important role in our mental wellness, and keeping a clean home, whether that’s your bedroom, apartment or house, has a variety of benefits you won’t want to ignore.

Learn about these benefits below, along with expert tips for cleaning your home and keeping it tidy.

Keeping Clean for Your Mental Health



“Our outer worlds invariably affect our inner worlds and vice versa,” says Danielle Roeske, Psy.D., vice president of residential services at Newport Healthcare.

Essentially, when our minds feel overwhelmed, our living spaces can also end up cluttered. In turn, a messy space can lead to stress, anxiety, difficulty concentrating and relationship strain, says Peggy Loo, Ph.D., licensed psychologist and director at Manhattan Therapy Collective.

Studies over the years have linked mental health to environmental exposure. A 1997 study indicates that childhood living conditions significantly impact health in adulthood, and a

2000 comparative study linked improvements in housing quality to residents' improved mental health[1][2]. More recently, a 2020 study in Korea associated substandard housing conditions, especially paired with housing unaffordability, with depressive symptoms in residents[3]. Residents in a 2021 study in China were more likely to report good health when living in tidy homes[4].

5 Mental Health Benefits of Cleaning



While a messy space can put you in a mental bind, this also means that tidying up your home can help you feel better. The following are a handful of ways cleaning can benefit your mental health, according to experts.

Sense of order and control. A 2017 study on young adults found that clutter was linked to procrastination, feeling overwhelmed and lower quality of life[5]. Our outer environments can act as a container for our emotional and psychic states, Dr. Roeske explains. “When there is order and structure to our outer environment, it can help us feel more able to manage some of the internal feeling states and worlds,” she adds.

Familiarity and consistency. Human beings prefer similar routines that offer us stability, even amid otherwise chaotic circumstances, Dr. Roeske notes. Keeping your household items in order can provide that familiarity. However, she adds that “order” doesn’t

necessarily mean everything is lined up perfectly and color coordinated, and that another person's sense of order may differ from yours.

Released endorphins. The physical act of cleaning can also release endorphins, which Dr. Roeske states, "is hugely beneficial as a pain reliever, stress reliever and overall enhancement of our well-being."

Improved focus. Having too many items in our field of vision distracts the brain's processing capacity, according to a 2011 Princeton Neuroscience Institute study[6]. Clearing away clutter allows the brain to focus on items and tasks one at a time.

Regulated emotions. The act of cleaning also requires us to slow down, which can offer a calming effect during overwhelming situations and help us explore and manage our emotions. "Deep cleaning can be a great constructive physical outlet for frustration," says Dr. Loo.

Dr. Loo notes that while cleaning can help support better mental health, mustering up extra energy to tidy can be difficult for folks with anxiety, depression or burnout. In this case, it may help to see a mental health professional as well to learn other evidence-based coping strategies.

7 Tips for Cleaning Your Home



First, know that you can take the cleaning process slow and figure out an approach that works for you, while progressing towards a cleaner home and improved mental health.

Below, organizing and cleaning experts provide their tips for decluttering your space and keeping it tidy for the long haul.

Pick your favorite or most important room first. “Different rooms or parts of a home will have a different charge for a person,” says Dr. Roeske. For example, the kitchen can be a place of great importance for some as that’s where meals are prepared and the family gathers. Keeping the kitchen clean and organized may offer a stronger sense of order to those folks. For others, a clean bedroom can be a sanctuary, and can contribute to healthier sleeping habits, which is also linked to better mental health.

Start small. “It’s amazing how much you can organize and tidy up in just 15 minutes a day,” says Lauren Saltman, professional organizer and owner of Living Simplified, a professional organizing company based in New Hampshire. She offers examples of minor changes you can make to decrease the pile-up of daily clutter, such as clearing off the kitchen table and washing the dishes immediately after dinner, and removing the junk mail first after visiting the mailbox and sorting the rest once you get inside.

Give everything a “home.” It can help to tackle certain small tasks by assigning objects to a home, or a location within your space where an item lives when it’s not in use, but still near where it is used the most, suggests Brenda Scott, owner of Tidy my Space, a professional organizing company in Ontario, Canada.

Use a goal to motivate you. “Think of your big picture vision,” suggests Lesley Spellman, founder of The Clutter Fairy and co-founder of The Declutter Hub, an organizing resource company in the U.K. For example, envision yourself having friends over for the dinner party you’ve been wanting to throw, but your cluttered dining room has kept you from following through. Visualizing a goal can give you something to work for while you clean.

Set non-negotiable tasks. These are the daily tidying and cleaning tasks that you cannot skip on. These will vary between homes, families and day-to-day lives, says Spellman, but can include wiping down the kitchen counter, unloading the dishwasher and sweeping the floor, for example. “Once your non-negotiables become habit, chores become part of your day and not an additional stress,” she adds.

Take it slow. Be realistic about your energy levels and time constraints while working toward your goal, Spellman urges, but don’t be afraid to move out of your comfort zone. Take the cleaning process one drawer or one cupboard at a time, for example, to avoid exhaustion and decreased motivation.

Your legal right to a clean, healthy environment



In brief:

- The ACT's human rights law now includes the right to a healthy environment.
- This article explains this legal right.

The ACT's human rights law now includes the right to a healthy environment. It protects the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The new right includes six elements that relate to human needs:

- clean air
- a safe climate
- access to safe water and adequate sanitation
- healthy and sustainably produced food
- non-toxic environments to live, work, study and play
- healthy biodiversity and eco-systems.

The right to a healthy environment also protects your rights to:

- access information about environmental harms
- participate in environmental decisions
- access justice.

Protecting the environment has community benefits now and in the future. These include:

- better health outcomes
- better ecosystems for current and future generations

- more support for vulnerable groups who are most at risk of environmental harm.

The right also protects against discrimination due to environmental harm. This could be indirect discrimination. An example would be building a hazardous facility near a disadvantaged community.

How the ACT protects your rights

The ACT Government always considers human rights when it makes new laws.

When introducing a new law, there must be a written statement stating whether the law is consistent with human rights. This statement considers how the law might impact the right to a healthy environment. ACT Government projects and policies must consider the right to a healthy environment. They must assess any potential impacts on human rights.

These impacts include any effects on the land and water for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. They have a connection to the land and are its traditional custodians.

Part of the right to a healthy environment is ensuring access to the land and waterways for:

- traditional practices such as fishing or hunting
- ceremonies
- heritage protection.

Indoor air quality & its affects



Australians spend most of our time indoors. The air quality within these spaces affects our health. Learn about how you can improve indoor air quality.

Indoor air quality

Indoor air quality is affected by many things, including:

- outside air pollution coming inside, such as emissions from vehicles and industry and smoke from bushfires and wood heaters
- volatile organic compounds, such as formaldehyde, emitted from building materials and furnishings
- microorganisms like viruses, bacteria and fungi (including moulds) which can be transmitted through the air
- gases like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide from sources such as gas heaters, cooktops and stoves
- tobacco smoke and vape aerosols
- dust, dust mites and pollen
- pollutants from domestic pets, such as pet dander.

Indoor air can have much higher concentrations of some pollutants and different health risks than outdoor air.

Health impacts of poor indoor air quality



Health impacts from air pollution in indoor environments include:

- carbon monoxide poisoning from using wood or gas heaters without enough ventilation
- transmission of infectious diseases like influenza, RSV and COVID-19 by airborne viruses
- respiratory and cardiovascular impacts from particulate matter
- asthma from dust mite allergens.

High levels of carbon dioxide and particulate matter pollution can affect educational results in school classrooms and reduce workplace productivity.

Ways to improve indoor air quality



There are simple ways to improve indoor air quality and reduce health problems. You can:

- not smoke or vape
- increase outside air flow by opening windows (if the outside air is clean)
- wear a P2 or N95 respirator mask to reduce the spread of airborne viruses
- use high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters suitable for the size of the indoor space

- when cooking, use a high-efficiency exhaust fan vented outside to remove emissions and cooking odours
- use an exhaust fan to remove steam and moist air
- keep exhaust fans clean from dirt and grease
- avoid generating moisture indoors (for example, using a clothes dryer without sufficient ventilation) or having damp surfaces that encourage microbiological growth
- manage moisture in buildings, in both the internal environment and in the fabric of the building itself
- use a door mat to help keep outdoor dust out
- remove indoor dust regularly, and clean air conditioner filters regularly
- ensure any mechanical ventilation systems are well-maintained, and have a high-grade filter, to bring clean outside air indoors
- where possible, choose an alternative method than a wood heater to heat your home
- avoid cleaning products, air fresheners, scents and sprays, cosmetics, glues, paint, varnishes, carpet and fibreboard with high volatile organic compound content
- avoid running a vehicle engine in a garage attached to a dwelling
- avoid using charcoal bead cookers, barbecues, camping stoves or outdoor heaters indoors
- keep your pets and their bedding clean.

Make sure you have sufficient ventilation, even when sealing draughts to save money on heating and cooling costs.

What to do if the outside air is polluted



Keep inside air as clean as possible from outdoor air pollutants such as smoke, vehicle fumes and industrial pollution. You can:

- close windows and doors during short episodes of outside air pollution and open them when air quality improves
- use a reverse cycle air conditioner or set other types of air conditioners to recirculate indoor air during short episodes of outside air pollution
- avoid using evaporative coolers during short episodes of outside air pollution, as they bring outside air inside
- during lengthy periods of outside air pollution, air out indoor spaces when the outside air quality improves even temporarily
- use a suitable HEPA filter to reduce airborne viruses and some other indoor air pollutants
- wear a P2 or N95 respirator mask.

If you or anyone in your care has trouble breathing, chest pain or discomfort call 000 for an ambulance.

People who are sensitive to smoke should actively monitor symptoms and follow their health management plan recommended by their doctor.

Air purifying plants: 20 of the best for your home

Breathe easy with these these natural toxin removers.

Looking to reduce toxins in your home? It's often the germs and toxins that you can't see that are the most harmful, but alas these air cleaning plants will help you remove toxins and improve air quality.

Here is a round-up of the best air purifying indoor plants, based on NASA's Clean Air Study, which will add a touch of colour and fresh air to your home.

1. Devil's Ivy or pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*)



Otherwise known as pothos or golden pothos, devil's ivy is an easy to grow indoor houseplant that helps fight off common household toxins. It adds instant colour to any room with cascading tendrils and grows well in water, pots and hanging baskets.

Toxins it helps remove: xylene, benzene, formaldehyde and trichloroethylene.

2. Dwarf Date Palm (*Phoenix Roebelenii*)

Dwarf or Pygmy palms are the babies of the palm family. They are relatively easy to grow in partial shade, growing up to six to 10 feet with their fronds also reaching up to six foot!

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde and xylene.

3. Peace Lily (Spathiphyllum)



Also known as a spathiphyllum, peace lilies are an easy and undemanding plant to look after. Their glossy green leaves make the perfect addition to any room especially those spots with low light. Keep them happy with a weekly water and fertilise with a slow-release fertiliser in spring to promote growth and those glorious white flowers.

Toxins it helps remove: benzene, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene

4. Philodendron



The heart-shaped philodendron is a luscious addition to indoor spaces. Philo's are relatively easy to look after: they just need moderate water and bright, indirect sunlight. The heartleaf philodendron has also been said to be harder to kill than to keep alive!

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde.

5. Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)

Spider plants are the perfect choice for newbies and those with a bad track record when it comes to plants. They thrive in indirect sunlight and survive under just about any conditions (they've been known to survive in temperatures as low as 2 degrees). Spider plants also send out shoots of baby spider plants called spiderettes.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde and xylene.

6. Chrysanthemums (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*, *xgrandiflorum* etc)



Chrysanthemums, sometimes known as disbuds or mums, are not only a great addition to a floral arrangement but they look great in your home and are known as one of the best air purifiers around. They are among the more difficult air purifying plants to grow but the payoff is beautiful, colourful blooms. They enjoy good air flow, bright indirect sunlight and watering with warm water only, making sure that they are allowed to dry fully in between drinks.

Toxin it helps remove: ammonia, benzene, formaldehyde, and xylene

7. Rubber plants (Ficus elastic)



These burgundy-stemmed, evergreen trees originated from India. They're a very hardy plant that love bright, filtered light and weekly watering in summer and fortnightly watering in winter. Rubber plants can grow in a small pot or be encouraged to grow into a large indoor tree in pots or straight in the ground.

Toxins it helps remove: xylene, benzene, formaldehyde and trichloroethylene.

8. Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata* v. *Bostoniensis*)

This easy-to-grow fern is known for its sword-shaped fronds which makes it perfect for a hanging basket or pedestal. The Boston Fern thrives in humid environments and requires consistent moisture. Keep them happy with regular misting, moist soil and position them in indirect sunlight near windows, balconies and patios. In winter cut the fronds back by around 2-inches to help regenerate and grow in the warmer months.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde and xylene.

9. Areca palms (*Chrysalidocarpus lutescens*)

Areca palms are great for bigger spaces. They are a powerhouse when it comes to eliminating toxins and they are even non-toxic to both dogs and cats. Look after them with lots of water (a couple of times a week) during summer but not as much in winter.

Toxins it helps remove: benzene, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, xylene

10. Pineapple Plant

A recent study by NASA revealed that pineapple plants can actually put an end to snoring. Whilst they don't remove any toxins from the air NASA claims that "pineapple plants produce oxygen and boost air quality at night which could improve sleep quality and cut out those snores."

These plants are very hardy and survive with very little water but do hate the cold.

11. Dracaena "Janet Craig" (*Dracaena Deremensis*)



Go big or go home! Dracaena's can grow up to 15-foot tall, making them perfect for filling voids and big spaces. These plants love indirect sunlight and under no circumstances should be placed in direct sunlight. Water them once a week in the warmer months but be careful as too much water can cause root decay.

Toxins it helps remove: xylene, trichloroethylene, and formaldehyde

12. Ficus/Weeping Fig (*Ficus benjamina*)

The ficus is native to southeast Asia, grown most commonly indoors the Weeping Fig can grow between two and 10 feet tall. Like most other air purifiers, ficus prefers bright, indirect sunlight and to be watered weekly, drying out fully between drinks.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde, trichloroethylene and benzene.

13. Snake Plant/Mother-in-Law's Tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata*)



Snake plants otherwise known as Mother-in-Law's Tongue is a succulent plant that can grow up to two meters in height. It is a low-maintenance plant that is hardy even if you neglect it. Place it somewhere with plenty of sunlight. Be careful not to overwater as they thrive in dry conditions.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde, trichloroethylene, benzene and xylene.

14. Aloe Vera (*Aloe vera* or *A. barbadensis*)

Aloe vera isn't just handy for their anti-inflammatory properties repairing wounds and helping with sunburn but it turns out it is a great air purifier too. They thrive in warm well-lit rooms, growing brown spots on their leaves when the amount of harmful chemicals is extreme.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde.

15. English ivy (*Hedera helix*)



You might recognise English ivy as the climber on many walls and trees outdoors but it's also effective as an air purifying plant, particularly for benzene. According to the NASA study, English ivy removed 89.8 per cent of benzene in one experiment – the highest percentage of any plant tested.

This plant grows well in small pots and can be crowded. They look great in hanging baskets and you can even propagate a cutting in water in just a few days.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde and benzene.

16. Flamingo Lily/Fleur (*Anthurium andraeanum*)



The Flamingo Lily is the perfect plant to add a pop of colour to any room, they flower 300 out of 365 days of the year. It loves bright indirect sunlight, watering one to two times a week and is particularly comfortable in more humid conditions like your bathroom and kitchen.

Toxins it helps remove: Formaldehyde, Ammonia, Xylene, Toluene.

17. Lady Palm (*Rhapis excelsa*)

The Lady Palm is a great option when it comes to air cleaners. Contrary, to popular beliefs these palms prefer cooler temps ranging from 15-23 degrees.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde, ammonia and xylene

18. Chinese Evergreen (*Aglaonema*)

The Chinese Evergreen plant comes in many varieties and is one of the easiest indoor house plants to grow. They tolerate most conditions but thrive in well-drained soil, humid temps with medium to low light conditions. It is recommended that you fertilise your Chinese Evergreen plants twice a year.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde and xylene.

19. Kimberly Queen Ferns (*Nephrolepis oblitterata*)

The Australian native Kimberly Queen Fern thrives in outdoor conditions but they also make for the perfect indoor plants. They are perfect for newbies and beginners as their unique straight, narrow upright fronds require little to no care. Kimberly Queen Ferns don't need to be pruned or cut back but make sure you keep them nice and moist with plenty of water and fertilise regularly in the warmer months.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde and benzene.

20. Bamboo Palm (*Chamaedorea seifrizii*)

These plants can grow pretty big (between four and 12 feet high) making them absolute formaldehyde filtering machines. They make great indoor additions as they are pet-friendly and are one of the few air cleaners that love a good dose of full sunlight.

Toxins it helps remove: formaldehyde, trichloroethylene and benzene.

The Best Way To Clean Venetian Blinds And Window Tracks



The little things make the difference in keeping your home spotlessly clean and welcoming. So, while vacuuming and wiping surfaces are important, other spots, such as Venetian

blinds and window tracks, are generally overlooked. These are small areas but they do impact the presentation of your space. Dusty blinds and tracks not only make your home look neglected but can also have an impact on air quality and function.

For tenants, these areas are even more important, especially when preparing for cheap end of lease cleaning Canberra. Property managers usually focus on these underlooked spots during inspections, and neglecting them can lead to bond deductions, even if the rest of the home is clean.

This guide will show you the easiest and most effective way to clean Venetian blinds and window tracks, helping you get your home ready for inspection. With the correct tools and methods applied, these cleaning tasks can be undertaken much more quickly, leaving your home will remain spotless.

1. Why Venetian Blinds and Window Tracks Matter



Dust, grime, and even mould accumulate on Venetian blinds and window tracks. Dirty blinds can make a room look untidy, and clogged tracks can make it difficult to operate the windows. To those who are about to vacate, grimy window features lead to deductions in your bond since property managers inspect little stuff that is often considered flawless.

Regular servicing makes a house look more appealing while improving air quality and preventing long-term damage.

2. Tools You'll Need

Before you begin, collect these common cleaning supplies:

- Vacuum with a crevice attachment
- Microfiber cloth or duster
- Bucket of warm, soapy water
- An old toothbrush or small cleaning brush
- White vinegar or all-purpose cleaner
- Cotton swabs for corners

These supplies make the whole cleaning process more efficient and thorough. Avoid using store-bought products as they contain VOCs that may pose potential health hazards.

3. Cleaning Venetian Blinds Like a Pro



Venetian blinds are a stylish and practical addition to any home. But the design might attract dust and grime on them. It is best cleaned by starting with regular dusting using a microfiber cloth or a vacuum cleaner. Running the cloth along the slats on both sides will remove most of the surface debris.

For tough stains, a damp cloth with a soapy solution will do the trick. Wipe each slat gently, and avoid soaking the wooden blinds since moisture is damaging to the wood. Metal or plastic blinds can be deep cleaned. Take the blinds down and soak them in a bathtub of warm water and detergent to get rid of grime that cannot be achieved with simple wiping. When clean and dry, rehang them for a fresh, new look on your windows.

4. Tackling Window Tracks

Window tracks attract a lot of dust, insects, and sticky residues. Cleaning these properly requires a lot of patience, but it will be worth your time. Begin vacuuming out the tracks to get rid of anything loose. The more you clean before, the better it will be to handle the tougher grime.

A mixture of baking soda and vinegar effectively removes stuck-on dirt. This chemical reaction helps break down the grime for easy scrubbing. Use a brush to loosen the dirt in the corners and edges to ensure that every inch of the track is clean. Then, after cleaning, a damp cloth must be used to wipe the tracks to make sure the windows run smoothly.

5. Maintaining Clean Blinds and Tracks



Regular maintenance is the key to keeping the condition of Venetian blinds and window tracks at their best. Dusting the blinds weekly prevents heavy accumulation of dirt, and vacuuming the window tracks once a month keeps grime under control. Such small habits help make deep cleaning easier and less time-consuming.

For longer-lasting results, use products that help reduce dust buildup. Anti-static sprays and dryer sheets applied to blinds can help them stay clean for longer periods, reducing the need for frequent cleaning. After cleaning, also lubricate the window tracks so that they do not stick and will continue to function smoothly.

6. The Health Benefits of Clean Blinds and Window Tracks

Besides the aesthetics, maintaining clean Venetian blinds and window tracks has greater health benefits. Dust, pollen, and other allergens frequently settle on the blinds and the tracks, creating allergies and breathing problems. Worse, mould will grow in damp window tracks. These can trigger severe health concerns for asthma-prone individuals and immunocompromised people.

The prevention of these allergens from circulating in the air means that the home environment is kept healthier. Homes with children and pets are even more sensitive to air quality issues, so regular cleaning is particularly important. Cleaning up these places makes your house seem more presentable, safer and more comfortable place to live.

Wrapping up

Cleaned Venetian blinds and window tracks can make all the difference in your home's appearance. Whether you do it yourself or hire professionals for an end of lease cleaning in Canberra, it ensures that everything goes smoothly and you get a full bond refund. Little effort now can save you much stress later.

Indoor air quality

Key points

- Many of us spend a lot of time inside our homes, so indoor air quality is important.
- The air inside our homes can be affected by various pollutants, including dust, mould spores, smoke and combustion products, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- At high enough levels, air pollutants can cause or exacerbate various health problems. Indoor air quality is of particular concern if you have asthma or other conditions that affect your breathing.

- You can take steps when designing, renovating or maintaining your home to ensure good air quality. These include:
 - designing for good ventilation
 - minimising soft floor coverings and furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned
 - ensuring kitchen and bathrooms vent to the outdoors
 - minimising the use of products with VOCs
 - keeping surfaces and furnishings clean.

Understanding indoor air quality



Most of us spend a large percentage of our lives indoors, so it is worth thinking about air quality in our homes. Poor indoor air quality may produce a range of health effects, from mild and generally non-specific symptoms such as headaches, tiredness or lethargy, to more severe effects such as sensitisation to allergens and aggravation of asthma and allergic responses. Poor indoor air quality in your home may exacerbate pre-existing conditions or cause new health issues.

Whether a source of air pollutants causes an indoor air quality problem or not depends on:

- the type of air pollutant
- the amount and rate at which it is released from its source

- the degree of ventilation available in the home to remove it from indoors
- the leakiness of your home, if the pollution source is outside
- the sensitivity of the person and any pre-existing conditions.

Some groups of people in the community are more vulnerable to pollutants than others, or are likely to spend more time indoors than the general population. These people include:

- the very young
- the very old
- those with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease
- those who are sensitised to specific substances.

Generally, the greater the amount of pollutant (exposure), the greater the health impact. The duration of exposure is also important – if low-level exposure occurs over a long period of time (perhaps many years) the total dose may be large.

What you do in the home can make a significant difference to the health of the indoor environment. For example, smoking, and poor cleaning procedures can add to air pollutants.



Indoor air pollutants

There are many different types of indoor airborne pollutants. Some types of pollutants and allergens are more common than others, and some are more hazardous than others. The following section describes various air pollutants that may be found in the home, from more to less common.

Dander and dust mites

Pet dander and dust mites can aggravate hay fever, asthma, nasal inflammation and eczema. Dander and dust mites are generally present in soft furnishings, including carpet, bedding and furniture.

To reduce the amount of dander and dust mites in your home, install hard flooring or vacuum often with a high-quality vacuum cleaner. Wash bedding and other soft furnishings frequently, and replace pillows and cushions regularly.

Mould



Mould produces tiny particles called spores that become airborne. When inhaled by people who are sensitive or allergic to them, they can cause irritation of the nose, eyes and skin, aggravate asthma and other respiratory diseases, and occasionally cause more severe health issues. Mould can grow indoors in damp areas, including bathrooms, damp

rooms, windowsills, indoor plants and poorly ventilated areas. Strategies to prevent mould include:

- install insulation and building membranes correctly to reduce condensation risk
- install the correct waterproofing to bathrooms and wet areas
- fix rising damp in existing buildings and improve subfloor ventilation
- fix sources of moisture such as leaks in plumbing or roofing
- reduce humidity inside the home by venting sources of moisture to the outside (for example, use exhaust fans in kitchens and bathrooms)
- remove condensation and mould as soon as possible.

Smoke and combustion products

Combustion products include smoke (small soot particles), ash and gases (including nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide) that can get inside your home from fireplaces and heaters burning wood, coal, gas or kerosene, gas cooking appliances, fumes from cooking (especially frying), tobacco smoking, bushfires, exhaust from cars in adjoining garages, and hobbies such as welding and soldering.

Combustion particles are so small they behave almost like a gas — they can enter or leave a home very easily. When you breathe them in, they travel into the deepest parts of the lungs. They can cause eye, nose and throat irritation; aggravation of asthma; chronic respiratory disease; and lung cancer.

To maintain good air quality when you have combustion sources inside the home:

- ensure plenty of fresh outdoor air is coming into the room
- vent pollutants to the outdoors (via a flue, chimney, exhaust fan or range hood)
- keep flues and chimneys clean, and make sure any permanent ventilation openings are not blocked
- service heating or cooking appliances regularly to ensure they are working properly and are not leaking gases into your home, and never use an appliance if it is damaged or not working properly
- always follow the appliance manufacturer's instructions — seek advice from the manufacturer, supplier or your gasfitter or plumber if you have any concerns
- ensure doors connecting garages to the house are tightly sealed and minimise running time for vehicle engines in garages connected to the home
- do not use barbeques or camp stoves indoors and do not use a gas oven or gas cooker to heat a room

- avoid smoking inside or near the home – smoking on balconies and terraces may reduce but will not eliminate environmental tobacco smoke in the home
- ensure your home is designed to allow controllable ventilation and can be well sealed when required, to avoid pollutants from outdoor combustion sources (for example, bushfires) entering the home.



Conclusion

A clean and well maintained home does more than improve aesthetics, it enhances your mental clarity, physical health, and overall wellbeing. By understanding the importance of indoor air quality, implementing practical cleaning routines, and incorporating natural elements like air purifying plants, you can create a living environment that supports a balanced lifestyle. Regular upkeep, attention to hidden areas such as blinds and window tracks, and awareness of your rights to a healthy environment ensure that your home remains a sanctuary. Small, consistent actions make a lasting difference, transforming your space into a place of comfort, productivity, and peace. A fresh home truly leads to a happier, healthier life.

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