

# Take a Tour of the IAQ House



Get a quick glimpse of some of the most important ways to protect the air in your home by touring the Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) House. Room-by-room, you'll learn about the key pollutants and how to address them.

## Living Room

A living room is usually a well-used area of a home and may harbor indoor pollutants. It is important to ventilate properly, keep secondhand smoke outside of the house, and vacuum and dust regularly.



Living Room

### Pet Dander and Hair

Pets can trigger allergy and asthma attacks due to dander and hair. Keep them out of the sleeping areas, and away from upholstered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys. Vacuum and clean carpets, rugs, and furniture often.

### Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke from cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products can trigger asthma and other respiratory illnesses especially in children. To help protect children from secondhand smoke, do not smoke or allow others to smoke inside your home or car.

### Carbon Monoxide

Fireplaces and leaking chimneys are sources of carbon monoxide. Ventilate rooms that have fireplaces, make certain the flue damper is operational and fully open when in use, and ensure the chimney is properly sealed.

## Bathroom

A bathroom is often the dampest area of a home. It is important to ventilate a bathroom during use and dry damp surfaces.



### Mold

Bathrooms are a common source of mold. Humidity from showers can cause moisture problems, which will lead to mold growth. Mold can cause allergic reactions, asthma, and other respiratory ailments. Installing and using a ventilation fan will help to control moisture and inhibit mold growth.

## Bedroom

A bedroom often contains materials that collect dust. It is important to clean bedding and other fabrics, and vacuum regularly.



### Dust

Dust mites can trigger allergy and asthma attacks. Dust mites are everywhere especially on pillows, blankets, carpets, upholstered furniture, and stuffed toys. Dust and vacuum your home regularly, wash bedding, and use allergen-proof mattress and pillow covers.

# Kitchen

A kitchen has appliances that may leak gases, and often contain chemicals for cleaning or removing pests. It is important to properly maintain and ventilate appliances, and safely store chemicals.



## Pesticides

Pesticides, used to rid homes of rodents, termites, insects, and other pests, can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat; damage the central nervous system and kidneys; and increase the risk of cancer. Don't leave food out, and if you must use pesticides, ventilate during and after use and follow directions to limit exposure. Use non-chemical methods of pest control when possible.

## Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

Common household cleaners, often placed under the kitchen sink, release Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), when used and stored. Store household products that contain chemicals according to manufacturers' instructions and keep all products away from children. Consider purchasing cleaners without VOCs.

## Carbon Monoxide

To help prevent carbon monoxide exposure, make sure appliances such as gas stoves vent to the outside whenever possible and that all appliances are properly installed, used, and maintained.

# Basement

A basement is a source of air leaks and moisture, and often contains various chemicals. It is important to ventilate, seal cracks, and properly store all chemicals.



## Radon

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers in the U.S. It is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can enter a home through cracks and openings in floors and walls that are in contact with the ground. Testing your home is simple and inexpensive.

**For Existing Homes:** Test for radon – testing is the only way to know if radon is in your home. Do-it-yourself test kits are convenient and accessible, or you may choose to have a professional test your home. If the test result indicates your radon level is too high, a qualified radon service professional can install a radon mitigation system.

## Carbon Monoxide

Combustion heating and cooling appliances such as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning units, gasoline-powered heaters, and other appliances are sources of carbon monoxide. Properly install, use, and maintain fuel-burning appliances. Install carbon monoxide detectors in living spaces.

## Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

Paints, resins, paint thinners, and chemicals, and other products, will still release Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) even while stored properly. Make sure there is plenty of ventilation when painting, remodeling, or using other products that may release VOCs. Consider purchasing low and no VOC products.

## Mold

Basements can be damp. Install a properly sized dehumidifier to help keep your basement at an appropriate humidity level and reduce the potential for mold. It is important to dry water-damaged areas and items within 24–48 hours to prevent mold growth.

**For New Construction:** Radon-resistant new construction (RRNC) draws radon from the soil and vents it through a pipe to the roof, preventing its entry into the house. This technique uses common materials and building skills. RRNC costs less than retrofitting a similar radon reduction system after the house is finished. New home buyers should ask their build to include RRNC features. All new homes, even new RRNC ones, should be tested for radon.