

From the Building Department

Is Your Indoor Air Healthy?

- **Change your air filters.** Depending on the unit and home's location, it is recommended to change your filter anywhere from once a month to once every three months. Changing an air filter is easy enough for a homeowner to do on his or her own, or can be a quick fix for your HVAC contractor.
- **Clean your ducts regularly.** Check your ducts annually for cleaning needs. Note that the frequency of your duct cleaning may change depending on the number of people or pets in your home, types of filters used, carpet, etc.
- **Clean your vents.** It can be common for mold to grow on HVAC vents. Mold means there are areas of excessive moisture or humidity, ideal for breeding grounds for mold spores. Those sources of water, combined with collections of dust and dirt within your ductwork, are problem spots that can cause a pungent smell throughout your home. Keeping vents clean can go a long way when it comes to maintaining air quality.
- **Install a whole-house air purifier.** To help keep the air inside your house as clean as possible. These cleaners are designed to help minimize the indoor air pollutants, such as dust and other allergens, so you and your family can breathe easier.

Try your luck at some questions to determine the quality of your home's air.



1. **True or False:** Radon and carbon monoxide are both invisible, odorless and tasteless gases that pose health threats to your home.
2. **True or False:** Some containments, such as radon, increase your chances of lung cancer.
3. **True or False:** Fall allergens including mold spores and ragweed only affect outdoor air.
4. **True or False:** Secondhand smoke is just as harmful as smoking- especially around children with asthma.
5. **True or False:** There is nothing I can do about mold and mildew in my basement.
6. **True or False:** Filters on appliances should be changed at least every three months.
7. **True or False:** The cleaning products I use do not affect the air I breathe.
8. **True or False:** Do not store chemicals in your home including harmful cleaning products, paints and varnishes.

Answers:

1. **True!** Every home should have a carbon monoxide detector. Using a carbon monoxide detector that detects low levels will provide the best protection for your home. Get your home tested for radon.
2. **True!** Exposure to radon over time can increase your chance of getting lung cancer. Get your home tested and properly ventilated to reduce the amount of radon in your home.
3. **False!** Mold spores and ragweed are brought into your home through open windows, on shoes and on your clothes.
4. **True!** If someone in your household smokes, the best way to protect your family is to quit smoking. Cigarette smoke lingers on clothing and your skin.
5. **False!** Many basements have mold and mildew problems due to too much moisture. Find out how moisture is getting in and fix the problem, then use a dehumidifier to remove excess moisture.
6. **True!** Change filters at least every three months and use a pleated electrostatic filter that is designed to catch small particles.
7. **False!** Use nontoxic unscented household cleaning products, wet dusting and mopping. Clean all furniture and floors regularly- even more if you have pets.
8. **True!** Chemical in paints, varnishes and harmful cleaning products should never be stored in the home. When using these products, protect yourself by using protective masks and gloves.