

# HEALTHY, WEALTHY & WISE

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Love  
the Air You  
**BREATHE**

When you get home at the end of a busy day, it feels good to take a nice deep breath in anticipation of a quiet evening indoors. That is what home is supposed to be; a refuge from the hectic world outside. But when you take that nice deep breath, do you ever stop to consider the quality of the air in your home?

What is "air"? Air is a mixture of gases that make up Earth's atmosphere. The part of the atmosphere that contains the right mixture of gases to support life contains nitrogen and oxygen, as well as trace amounts of argon, carbon dioxide, helium, neon and other gases. Air also contains variable amounts of water vapor. We refer to the amount of suspended water vapor as humidity.

Humidity plays an important role in indoor air quality. The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and

Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommends maintaining indoor relative humidity levels between 30% and 50% for human health and comfort.

Excessive humidity can create an environment where microbes can flourish and create unsanitary conditions. In addition, higher humidity can result in condensation of water on surfaces. This can hold soils and organic matter, creating a perfect incubator for mold, which can exacerbate asthma and allergies.

See "BREATHE" on next page



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Air suspends particles. Most airborne particles are harmless. However, others can cause problems, particularly for those with asthma, allergies or immune disorders. There are four keys to keeping your indoor air clean and healthy: exclude, capture, clean and control.

**Exclude** – keep contaminants out. Keeping contaminants out of the home can be challenging because most airborne particles are tiny and can be everywhere. Pollen, carbon, mold spores, organic matter, insect matter, pollution, and plain old dirt enter the home, transported on air currents, clothing and shoes. By keeping doors and windows closed, removing shoes when entering and immediately changing your clothing after dusty activities like yard work, you can reduce the entry of pollutants.

There are other contaminants that originate from within the home. Pet and human dander, food particles, dust mites, cooking gases, sprays, chemi-

cal, cleaning agents and many other particulates combine to reduce overall indoor air quality. That's why exclusion is only part of the solution.

**Capture** – filter and contain that which enters. When airborne particles enter your home, they remain suspended for a period of time. Those that are larger or denser drop out of the air and settle on surfaces. Smaller, lighter particles remain suspended longer, and are best removed by air filtration devices and the filter on your home's HVAC (heating, ventilation and air-conditioning) system. Use high quality pleated filters designed for your HVAC.

**Clean** – remove pollutants from surfaces. Eventually, particles settle on surfaces such as floors, furniture, counters, windowsills, shelves and walls. Vacuuming and dusting remove most of the particles, but make sure that your vacuum cleaner has good filtration also.

Hard surfaces can be cleaned with electrostatic dusters or dust cloths that

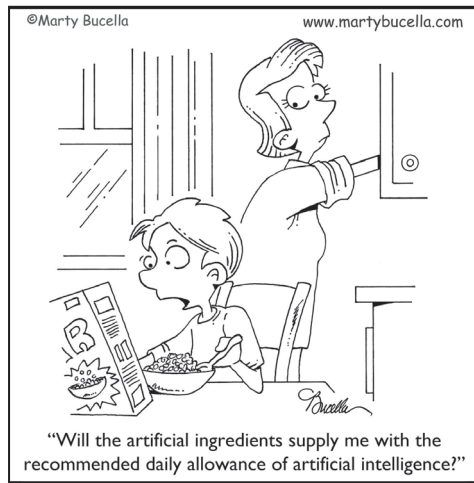
attract and hold particles, or by wiping hard surfaces with a damp cloth and wet mopping floors. Other surfaces such as carpet, area rugs and upholstery will require periodic professional cleaning to remove accumulated soils and pollutants.

**Control** – maintain equipment, humidity levels and filters. Proper maintenance is important. Ensure your vacuum, HVAC system, range hood, bathroom exhaust fans and so forth are working optimally. Clean or replace filters regularly.

Speaking of filters, carpeting is the largest air filter in most homes because of its capacity to capture and hold large amounts of soils and pollutants. Keeping your carpet and upholstery clean is one of the best ways to clear the air in your home.

Call **Chet's Cleaning** for more information or to schedule your next service.

### The Good Life



### Good Clean Funnies

**What word starts with E and has only one letter in it?**

Envelope.

**What do you call a flower that runs on electricity?** A power plant!

**What did the three-legged dog say when he walked into a saloon?**

"I'm looking for the man who shot my paw!"



### VALENTINE Strawberries

#### Directions

Line a baking sheet with parchment or wax paper.

Microwave candy melts in separate bowls, 1 bowl at a time, stirring every 30 seconds, until melted.

Dip strawberries into desired color of candy melts. Let excess candy drip off, then set on the prepared baking sheet. Drizzle with another color of candy melts. Top with sprinkles. Chill strawberries until set, at least 15 minutes and up to 2 days.

#### Ingredients

- 8 ounces pink candy melts
- 8 ounces white candy melts
- 8 ounces bright pink candy melts
- 24 large fresh strawberries
- Sprinkles as needed (optional)

**Prep Time:** 15 mins

**Cook Time:** 5 mins

**Additional Time:** 15 mins

**Total Time:** 35 mins

**Servings:** 24



Recipe courtesy [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)



## How IMPORTANT are Wellness Visits and Screenings?

Seeing your doctor regularly is crucial. It helps establish a baseline when everything is fine. This provides a basis for comparison.

Checkups also provide opportunities to ask questions and get recommendations for screenings. Your health care provider can advise you on preventive measures to help keep illnesses at bay, and they may help catch warning signs for health conditions that are more treatable when caught early.

A recent survey showed over 50% of the respondents who received a cancer diagnosis found out after a regularly scheduled cancer screening or routine exam, underscoring their importance. It also found many younger Americans use convenience care instead of regular appointments with a primary physician, using urgent care or the emergency room - which is much more expensive.

Wellness visits and screenings save time - by helping avoid illness - and money you might spend on treatments for conditions that could have been prevented or addressed earlier.

### Overcoming barriers to preventive care:

Most people delay wellness visits because they "feel fine." Others are concerned about missing work, as well as the costs of a wellness visit. If you are worried about missing work, check with your employer for policies on health checkups and screenings. You may also be able to find health clinics or telehealth opportunities with more flexible hours, and can use retail health clinics for services like vaccinations.

Consult your insurance provider to learn what's covered in your health insurance plan. Many plans cover wellness visits, health screenings and vaccinations at least in part.

**Do you put wellness visits and health screenings at the top of your to-do list? Unfortunately, many Americans don't.**

## Turn LEFTOVERS into a TASTY Inexpensive Meal



Try these **five** creative tips that can transform the dreaded leftovers into delicious dishes and save time and money!

### 1. A hot meal to warm your bones -

Gather leftover vegetables, meats and bones and throw them into a Dutch Oven. In no time, you'll have warm soup or stew to enjoy on those cold winter days. You can also make stock that you can freeze and use in future dishes.

### 2. Easy and hearty handhelds -

Leftover turkey and ham make for a great protein base for quick meals. Whether you have sandwiches, tacos or wraps on the menu, repurposing your party protein can be quick, easy, and delicious. **Choose your favorite or mix and match!** If you have leftover cranberry sauce or roasted sweet potatoes, these can also be great additions.

**3. Taters for breakfast -** Do you have loads of leftover mashed or sweet potatoes? Grab

your favorite recipe and incorporate these sweet or mashed potatoes into your pancake or waffle batter. After cooking, consider topping with chives or even cranberry sauce.

**4. Whip up a decadent dessert -** If you have leftover cartons of eggnog after your family get-together, use your mixer to transform that eggnog into whipped cream. It will add a rich, creamy and spiced flavor to leftover pie slices - especially pumpkin pies. Also, consider blending eggnog into frosting to top any leftover holiday cookies.

### 5. Layer leftovers into a casserole -

Casseroles are the perfect format for leftovers. Simply layer meat, gravy and veggies into an oven-safe dish, refrigerate and reheat the next day. You can even simplify the process by creating the casserole when you clean up after your gathering.



BPT

**A large family gathering wouldn't be complete without a feast. However, it's important to keep in mind that large holiday meals can easily produce food waste.**



## Valentine's Day: From a Dark Ritual to LOVE

When Valentine's Day is discussed, people immediately think of romance. You have couples sharing flowers, chocolates and cards - lots of cards - on a day geared toward romantic love.

But Valentine's Day wasn't always like that. In ancient times, love had very little to do with it.

**When did Valentine's Day become about love and romance?** According to historians, the feast of Lupercalia, which honored the Roman God of Fertility, Lupercus, was celebrated from Feb. 13 to 15. This ritual included drunken celebrations and animal sacrifice. Pope Gelasius I, to expel these pagan rituals, combined the festival with St. Valentine's Day in the fifth century. The holiday matured from the revelry of ancient Rome to a day of romantic love over time. As early as the middle ages people exchanged Valentine's Day cards.

**But who was St. Valentine?** There have been multiple St. Valentines, so it is unclear who is the true namesake for the holiday.

One Valentine was a priest in third-century Rome who defied Emperor Claudius II after the ruler outlawed marriage for young men. St. Valentine would perform marriages in secret for young lovers, ultimately leading to his death.

Another St. Valentine (of Terni), was a bishop who was beheaded by Emperor Claudius.

There are many other St. Valentine legends, including one of an imprisoned saint sending the first "Valentine" greeting after falling in love with a young girl who often visited him. Before his death, the saint allegedly wrote her a letter signed: "From your Valentine."

While the true story of Valentine's Day remains a mystery, most portray the saint as a heroic, kind, and romantic person.

Delaware News Journal

**It was around 1913 when Feb. 14 literally became a Hallmark holiday. The card maker began mass producing valentines and from that point on romance and commercialism went into overdrive.**



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