

HEALTHY, WEALTHY & WISE

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Breathe Better Air at Home

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 an unsanitary condition. 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.

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

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Beef Stew with Roasted Vegetables

Ingredients:

- 4 cups cubed vegetables (cut into 1/2-inch pieces), such as carrots, butternut squash, parsnips, or sweet potatoes
- 1 medium onion, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless beef sirloin steak, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3/4 cup chicken broth
- 3 bay leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, coarse grind
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup dry red wine or apple juice
- 3 cups prepared mashed potatoes

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Toss vegetables and onion with 1 tablespoon olive oil on large baking sheet. Roast 20 minutes or until vegetables are golden.
2. Meanwhile, cook and stir beef in remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in large skillet on medium-high heat 5 minutes or until beef is browned. Add roasted vegetables, chicken broth, bay leaves, thyme, pepper, salt and wine. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 10 minutes or until sauce is slightly thickened. Remove bay leaves from stew before serving. Serve stew over mashed potatoes.

recipe courtesy allrecipes.com

► Continued from cover

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 and their feces, cooking gases, sprays, chemicals, 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, window sills, 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.

Social Media and the Elderly

Social media is often criticized for its tendency to isolate people behind their computer screens, limiting their face-to-face, real world interactions. But for one group, Americans 65 and older, it can have a different effect.

A recent Michigan State University study showed that Internet use by those of retirement age actually reduces the chances of depression by more than 30 percent. This comes from an increased ability to communicate and stay connected with friends and family who may not live nearby. Those living alone showed the greatest reduction in depression rates.



But the researchers stressed that, as in all things, moderation is the key. The best way to stay connected with your social network is a combination of social media use and actually being with your loved ones. In this way, social media enhances your connections rather than replacing them.

Check Your Engine

Since 1994, cars and trucks have been required to have an on-board diagnostics system to ensure proper emission-control system operation. If your vehicle shows any signs of having an emission problem, your "Check Engine" or "Service Engine Soon" light will glow. It is intended to inform the driver that a problem has been detected and vehicle service is needed.

It can be tempting to ignore this light. After all, your vehicle continues to drive in what seems like a normal fashion, and there seems to be no immediate need to take it in for service. A steady warning light indicates that something is amiss and the vehicle should be brought in for service as soon as is convenient. It is not an emergency situation, but should be addressed within a few days. However, a blinking warning light should be heeded immediately. A vehicle with this light flashing



should be taken in for service at the earliest opportunity.

Possible causes of warning light activation include an overheating catalytic converter, an oxygen sensor malfunction, a fouled spark plug, a loose gas cap, or up to a hundred other causes. The glitches that activate this light are usually those which a driver would not detect. They can often lead to other problems if not addressed promptly, including fuel inefficiency, a shortened engine life, or expensive repairs.

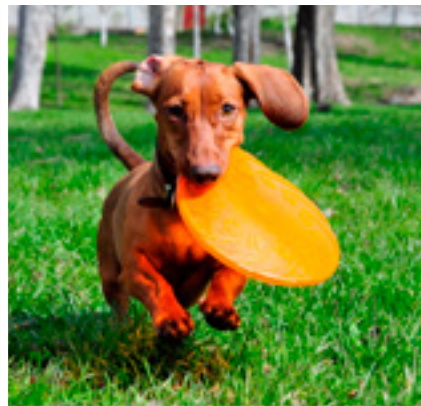
Your best bet is to take a reasoned response. It is not a cause for panic, but should not be ignored either.

A Happy, Active Pet

Many dogs and cats spend much of their day with little to do. They sit at home, resting and waiting for their human companions to return home from work. These pets can become bored which often leads to naughty behavior. They also may not be getting the exercise they need each day.

To help your solitary pet, be sure to engage in at least 30 minutes of exercise twice a day with your pet. You can take a walk, throw a ball, or play tug-of-war with a toy. Both dogs and cats love to chase after furry toys or small balls. When you are away, leave some fun chew toys for your dog and a scratching post for your cat.

Consider asking a friend or neighbor let your dog out for part of the day. But be sure to keep on top of negative behavior like excessive barking. If this becomes a problem, you will need to modify your dog's



environment and behavior with positive activities. If your cat is an indoor cat, set up an outdoor enclosure to give him some fresh air and varied exercise activities.

Finally, be sure to spend as much fun time with your pet when you are at home as possible. Include him in family activities and encourage your children to spend daily play time with your pet. You'll find that everyone can benefit from these fun bonding experiences.

Good Clean Funnies

Math Answer

A little boy was in math class when his teacher called upon him to answer a question. "Timmy, if you had \$10 and you asked your father for \$4 more, how many dollars would you have?"

"I would have \$10," answered Timmy.

"No, no," replied the teacher, "you don't know your arithmetic!"

"Well, Teacher, you don't know my father!"



Quick Tips

Safety Tip

If the key-fob for your car has a panic alert button on it, place it by your bedside each night. If you were to be a victim of a home invasion, you can press the button to cause the horn to blast and the headlights to flash. This could be all it takes to scare off an intruder and to notify your neighbors that something is amiss.

Organizing Tip

Tall and narrow shelving units can make great benches. Turn the bookshelf on its side and lay it on the floor. Top the unit with a covered foam pad to make a seat for the bench. Into each cubby of the shelving unit, you can place an organizer basket to hold toys, linens, clothing, shoes, or other items. Not only do you get storage, but the space makes great seating for a playroom, kid's room, or entryway.



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Win a \$50 VISA Gift Card

Read this edition of Healthy, Wealthy & Wise to find the answer to the following trivia question:

ASHRAE is an acronym that stands for:

- a. American Society of Health, Recreation and Applied Education
- b. American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Engineers
- c. Association for Sustainable Health, Recycling, Air and Environment
- d. Acronyms are Silly, Humorous, Ridiculous, Arbitrary and Endless

When you think you've found the correct answer, email it to chet@chetscleaning.com or call our office at (248) 584-1819. We will draw from the correct answers and someone will win a \$50 VISA Gift Card.

Contest Expires 10/31/2016.

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