



## bulkley valley - lakes district airshed management society

**FACT SHEET**

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# indoor air quality

understanding and improving inside air



throat, headaches, dizziness and cold like symptoms including coughing, sneezing and congestion. Health impacts can be more severe for people with certain allergies. Groups most sensitive are the same as those at risk for bad outdoor air quality; those with asthma and other lung conditions, children, the elderly as well as those with allergies.

## indoor air pollutants

There are two types of indoor air pollutants: biological and chemical pollutants. Biological pollutants include mould, dust mites and bacteria. Mould is especially a problem in homes with high humidity.

Chemical pollutants include particles from stoves and other heating appliances, tobacco smoke, as well as particles from industrial products and building materials to different extents. Air coming from outside may also contain chemicals especially during a bad air quality episode.

A more detailed look at potential indoor air quality hazards in the home can be found on the Health Canada website at:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/air/in/games-jeux/chasse-air-chase-eng.php>

## health impacts

There are a wide range of health impacts including; the irritation of the eyes, nose and

## what can be done?

- Avoid buying products containing hazardous chemicals especially those where the chemicals will be sprayed into the air;
- If mould is spotted, clean it away with a cloth and dish detergent. For bigger jobs, a diluted solution of water and either Tea tree oil (an essential oil found in most health food stores), or grapefruit seed extract or vinegar are highly effective (for recipes, visit <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/three-ways-to-kill-mold-naturally.html> ). For more general cleaning recipes, try the Recycling Council of BC website at [www.rcbc.bc.ca](http://www.rcbc.bc.ca)
- Keep the home's relative humidity at around 50% in the summer and 30% in the winter. Humidity can be measure with a hygrometer available cheaply at local hardware stores.

- Always use a fan in high humidity situations like cooking or showers.
- Keep your home clean and minimize dust. HEPA filters on vacuum cleaners or as part of an indoor air quality device have proven to be effective.
- Upgrading your woodstove and burning clean will also contribute to healthier indoor air.
- Add some plants to your rooms to help purify the air

## healthy house plants

In the late 1980s, a study by NASA and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) resulted in excellent news for homeowners and office workers everywhere.

The study concluded that common houseplants such as bamboo palms and spider plants not only make indoor spaces more attractive, they also help to purify the air!

The recommended plants are listed below and most should be easily available from floral shops and local nurseries.

1. Philodendron scandens `oxycardium', heartleaf philodendron
2. Philodendron domesticum, elephant ear philodendron
3. Dracaena fragrans `Massangeana', cornstalk dracaena
4. Hedera helix, English ivy
5. Chlorophytum comosum, spider plant
6. Dracaena deremensis `Janet Craig', Janet Craig dracaena
7. Dracaena deremensis `Warneckii', Warneck dracaena

8. Ficus benjamina, weeping fig
9. Epipremnum aureum, golden pothos
10. Spathiphyllum `Mauna Loa', peace lily
11. Philodendron selloum, selloum philodendron
12. Aglaonema modestum, Chinese evergreen
13. Chamaedorea sefritzii, bamboo or reed palm
14. Sansevieria trifasciata, snake plant
15. Dracaena marginata , red-edged dracaena

For an average home of under 2,000 square feet, the study recommends using at least fifteen samples of a good variety of these common houseplants to help improve air quality. They also recommend that the plants be grown in six inch containers or larger.

source:

<http://www.cleanairgardening.com/houseplants.html>

## Useful contacts

Amerispec Home Inspection Service 250-847-3222 or 1-888-599-4999 to book an audit to determine poor indoor air quality causes and solutions.

Professional cleaning services to treat and remove mold can be found in the phonebook.

For advice and information on available rebates for upgrading woodstoves, contact the Skeena – BVLVD Woodstove Exchange Program Coordinator 847-7256 or 1-888-334-0336 [colin.macleod@gov.bc.ca](mailto:colin.macleod@gov.bc.ca)

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