

# The perils of breathing indoors



*Pollution is responsible for 16% of all deaths globally according to the **Lancet** Commission on Pollution and Health. I've always been a big advocate of environmental medicine—supporting wellness by minimizing exposures to toxins. A good place to start is with the air we breathe in our homes and workplaces.*

*—Dr. Ronald Hoffman*

*(This article contains sponsored content)*

The quality of the air we breathe has long been at the forefront of political debate. Since the publication of *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson, the western world has had a wake-up call and realized that air quality has a direct effect on our health. Air quality was at the forefront of the environmental/political debate as recently as this past summer, once forest fire season was underway and saw millions of acres of forestland burned. Carcinogens were flooded into the atmosphere—and into homes.



When we talk about air quality, many people think only of

pollution, smoke, or other factors affecting the air we breathe when we're outdoors. But what about the air we breathe *inside*? Approximately 90% of our lives are spent indoors, which means that good indoor air quality is essential for overall health.

“Indoor air quality” refers to the air existing in your home or workplace. It is air that seeps in through drafty spots between the door frame, or is gladly welcomed in through air conditioning systems which suck the air in from outside through a series of filters, ducts, and pumps. In the case of the recent forest fires, even indoor air quality suffered greatly. In many areas, the air quality was so harmful inside homes, that many folks wore filtered air masks or used air purification devices to help mitigate the toxins *in their own homes*.

However, it does not take a natural disaster for poor air quality to be present. A recent study by the Environmental Protection Agency noted that indoor air quality is often much higher in pollutants and harmful particulates than outdoor air. (EPA, 2017) Recently the EPA concluded that “studies of human exposure to air pollutants indicate that indoor levels of pollutants may be two to five times – and occasionally more than 100 times – higher than outdoor levels.” (EPA, 2016 Why Indoor Air Quality is Important in Schools) According to the EPA good indoor air quality is determined by the following categories:

- Control of airborne pollutants
- Adequate outdoor air
- Maintaining temperature and humidity

Indoor air quality can have wide-ranging effects on our daily lives – remember, that is the air that we live in, that we sleep in. The majority of all the breaths we take are with air that is in our homes or workplaces.

## **Common Pollutants in Indoor Air**

The air that we breathe is not just O<sub>2</sub>, it's a combination of oxygen, nitrogen, carbon monoxide, and small matter particulates. The oxygen and nitrogen, and even the carbon monoxide, pose a minimal health risk to people when they are at balanced levels. (Carbon monoxide is dangerous to people only when the balance of carbon monoxide in the air reaches unsafe levels; this can happen in your home, and most cases are related to faulty HVAC systems or poor ventilation, which is why carbon monoxide detectors are now required to be installed in every home.) The real danger in our air comes from the small matter particulates, which can directly affect our health.

"Small matter particulates" is a term used to describe pollutants and particles in the air. Most commonly, particulate matter is made up of microscopic debris, but some more significant particulate matter, such as dirt, dust, and soot, can be seen by the naked eye. In the home, particulate matter is released from wood or pellet burning fireplaces and stoves, scented candles, incense, and home deodorizers. Chemicals and carcinogens released by these common household items are directly breathed in and can begin to cause damage over time.

Secondhand Smoke is the most widely recognized culprit in polluting indoor air, and has been continuously linked to lung cancer, chronic lung issues, and a slew of permanent respiratory ailments. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2006)

## **Poor Air Quality and Weight**



Health issues related to air quality have been well documented. Poor air quality has been linked to such debilitating conditions as stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer. (WHO, 2016) Poor air quality in the home has also been linked to low birth weight for infants, which itself is connected to a slew of recurring health issues. (Smoking has long been considered a contributing factor to low birth weight.) Poor air quality has also been related to asthma, headaches, and the development of allergies.

## **Poor Air Quality and Depression**

Indoor air quality is essential for overall health, including mental health. Chemical particulates released by overuse of synthetic fragrances, home deodorizers and poor ventilation can contribute to poor air quality and lead to anxiety, along with other health issues such as chemical sensitivities, headaches, and insomnia. Increased exposure by living with poor air quality in the home can lead to additional underlying problems such as depression. Proper ventilation and exposure to outdoor air, as well as a reduction in the use of chemical fragrances and home deodorizers, can significantly improve indoor air quality.

## **Improving the Air Quality in Your Home**

There are several ways that indoor air quality can be improved:



- Circulating outdoor air into the home
- Installing proper air filters
- Increasing ventilation
- Keeping outbound air ducts clear (essential after either a rainstorm or a snowstorm)
- Decreasing or eliminating the use of fossil fuels for cooking and heating
- Decreasing or eliminating the use of chemical fragrances, incense, and home deodorizers.

The air quality in the home is of utmost importance when it comes to overall health. Increasing the quality of the air *indoors* is often not at the forefront of the environmental debate. However, considering the facts that are out there about the importance of good indoor air quality, we believe it should be. Indoor air quality should be at the center of the conversation about preventable and even easily improved health conditions that are impacted by environmental health.

With companies like EnviroKlenz, whose mission is to make indoor air as pure and clean as possible without the use of dangerous chemicals, we can take steps to improve our indoor air substantially. Indoor air quality should be at the forefront of our minds, and learning to take proactive steps in improving our air can help us live better and healthier lives.

For more information on patented two-stage air filtration device, for VOC and Odor Removal, please click here: [EnviroKlenz Air Purifier](#)

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