

Indoor air quality at home

Information for the public

Published: 8 January 2020

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Improving the air we breathe at home

Many people know about the health risks caused by outdoor air pollution. But how often do we think about the effects of the air we breathe at home? Air pollutants in the home range from mould spores caused by dampness to toxic fumes from gas cookers, open fires, candles or wood burners. They also include allergens from house dust mites and vapours from household sprays, cleaning materials, paintwork and furnishings.

Poor air quality at home can lead to discomfort like a tickly throat, blocked nose or watery eyes, but it can also trigger illnesses like asthma, allergies or a heart condition.

People who spend more time at home, for example young children and frail older people, are particularly vulnerable. But others are at risk too, including pregnant women and their unborn babies, people with a heart or lung condition, and people living in poor quality housing.

We want this guideline to help everyone to live in homes with the best possible air quality by making sure:

- every local authority has a plan for improving the air in people's homes
- local authorities raise awareness about poor air quality at home among professionals who can help tackle the problem, and the public
- professionals like housing officers, healthcare staff and social workers know how to spot people at risk from poor air quality – and how to help them get a housing assessment or home inspection
- people know what practical steps can improve the air at home, like using an extractor fan when cooking
- architects, designers, builders and contractors comply with building standards when working on both new and existing homes, and follow manufacturers' instructions on how to use paints, adhesives, solvents and other materials that can pollute indoor air
- property managers and landlords meet their responsibilities to help prevent problems from indoor air pollution for their tenants.

Where can I find out more?

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Action Against Allergy](#), 020 8892 2711
- [Allergy UK](#), 01322 619898
- [Asthma UK](#), 0300 222 5800
- [British Heart Foundation](#), 0300 330 3311
- [British Lung Foundation](#), 03000 030 555
- [Global Action Plan: Clean Air Hub](#), 020 3817 7636

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by indoor air pollution, as well as a range of other experts. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-3626-7