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# Respiratory Health

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Living with Asthma
- Improving your allergies
- Improve your home's air quality
- Alternatives to common household products.

## Living with Asthma

There are 2 types of asthma: Intrinsic or non-allergenic in this type the bronchial reaction is due to factors such as chemicals, cold air, exercise, infection and emotional upset. Extrinsic or allergic asthma is considered an allergy-related condition with a characteristic rise in allergy marker IgE. Asthma is characterized by spasm of bronchial tubes and excessive excretion of viscous mucous in the lungs that can lead to difficult breathing. It occurs as recurrent attacks, which range from mild wheezing to a life-threatening inability to breath.

Some causative factors include Food allergy: many studies have indicated that food allergies play an important role in asthma and hayfever.

Low stomach acid: Inadequate stomach acid should be assessed especially for those whom food allergy causes their asthma.



Picture shows normal bronchiole and spasm during asthma.

Food additives: It is very important to eliminate food additives such as artificial dyes and preservatives used in foods, beverages and drugs. The most common coloring agents are azo dyes—orange, sunset yellow,

amaranth and red and the non-azo dye pater blue. The most commonly used preservatives in food are sodium benzoate, sulphur dioxide and benzoates. The key is to eat fresh fruits and vegetables and whole food rather than packaged and processed food.

The key element in treating asthma is to find the causative factor. Diet, nutritional supplements and botanical medicine are effective ways to treat asthma. Homotoxicology is also an effective treatment. It uses low dose homeopathic medicine to cleanse at cellular level and improve the health of tissue and general condition of the individual.

## Improving your allergies

Hayfever is an allergic reaction to wind-borne pollens. Significant pollens inducing hayfever include various grass and tree pollens. If the hayfever develops in the spring it is usually due to tree pollens; if it develops in the summer grass and weed pollens are usually the culprits. Some people develop hayfever in response to airborne fungus spores. These spores are most common in mid-

March to late November.

By improving your immune system, proper nutrition, and reduced exposure to the allergens your body will be better able to handle allergies.

Regular detoxification is very important in keeping your body at optimal health.

Homeopathic remedies have also

been useful in my practice to help those with allergic symptoms. Herbs such as Angelica (Angelica Sinensis) has been shown to have significant effect in conditions in which individuals are sensitive to a variety of substances.

Desensitization techniques have also been used and have proven effective for some people.

# Improve your home's air quality



In industrialized countries the average person spends 80 to 90 percent of their time indoors—in the home, school or work place. The air quality indoors, is unfortunately, two to five times worse than it is outside. It is particularly important to keep the air inside your home as clean and fresh as possible. Your home's building materials, furnishings and care products, in addition to the activities that are carried on in your home, can all have an effect on the quality of the air inside.

## Contaminants of Indoor Air

There are many things in homes that can contaminate the air you breathe. The types of indoor air pollutants that affect human health are characterized as biological, chemical, or physical.

## Common indoor air contaminants can include:

### 1. Biological Contaminants:

- Fungi, Moulds
- Dust mites
- Animal dander

### 2. Chemical Contaminants (Organic):

- Furniture and carpets emitting volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Tobacco smoke
- Combustion by-products (furnaces, stoves, fireplaces)
- Chemicals from cleaners
- Paints, solvents and glues
- Perfumes and fragrances
- Pesticides

### 3. Chemical Contaminants (Inorganic):

- Lead (old lead paint, lead pipes)
- Asbestos

### 4. Physical Contaminants:

- Electromagnetic radiation
- Radon

## Possible Health Effects

Common symptoms of living with poor indoor air quality can include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Trouble concentrating
- Fatigue
- Eye dryness and/or irritation
- Stuffy nose and/or sneezing
- Sinus congestion
- Sore throat and/or husky voice
- Dry cough
- Wheezing and/or shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Skin dryness and/or rashes

## What you can do:

Here are some choices you can make as precautions to help protect you and your family from potentially harmful exposures and/or from known toxic substances.

### 1. Biological Contaminants:

- Stop leaks and clean up moisture immediately.
- Replace any porous materials that have been damaged by water, such as sheetrock, carpeting, and upholstered furniture.
- Remove clutter, especially from basements (moulds) and bedrooms (dust mites).
- Keep pets out of the bedroom. Wash bedding in hot (not warm) water weekly to kill dust mites.

### Chemical Contaminants (Organic):

- Use a one-inch pleated filter in your furnace, rather than the usual flat

surface filter, as there is more surface area to collect more dust particles. Remember to replace the filter regularly.

- Avoid indoor smoking.
- If you have a gas stove, make sure your exhaust fan is functioning properly, and that you use it every time you use the stove.

- Use [environmentally safe cleaning products](#). Please see next article.

- Open windows and use kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans if you use cleaning compounds, personal care products and other materials that give off VOC's.

- Provide ample ventilation when new furnishings are first brought into the home.

- Choose solid wood or metal furniture when possible.

- Choose sheets, blankets, window treatments, and other fabrics that are made of cotton and not treated with finishes to resist stains or wrinkles. If you do purchase treated fabrics, wash them thoroughly before storage and air out before using to reduce the amount of VOC's inhaled.

- Use a potpourri of dried flowers, herbs or citrus peels instead of synthetic air fresheners if you wish to add fragrance to the air.

### 3. Chemical Contaminants (Inorganic):

- NEVER MIX AMMONIA WITH BLEACH. The chlorine in the bleach reacts with the ammonia to produce a very hazardous gas.

- If your drinking water goes through old lead pipes, be sure to run your water for 2-3 minutes in the mornings before using, and never use hot water from the tap for cooking. Water filters containing activated carbon can remove lead, but must be changed regularly according to the manufacturer's suggestions.

- If you are removing any materials in your home that contain asbestos, speak to your local health department or look in the Yellow Pages under Asbestos Abatement and Removal.

# Improve your home's air quality— con't

## 4. Physical Contaminants:

- Keep a safe distance from microwaves, computers, bedside clocks and radios, and minimize cell phone use, while research proceeds on health effects of electromagnetic radiation.
- Have your home tested for radon and take remedial action if necessary. For more information on radon testing, see the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation booklet "Radon, a Guide for Canadian Homeowners". Go to: [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca) and search Radon.

## Alternatives to Common Household Products

Do you find you dread cleaning or doing laundry, because the cleaners and detergents sting your eyes, make you wheeze or give you a headache? Next cleaning or laundry day, why not try something a little different? Try setting aside your regular cleaners and detergents and try some homemade or alternative products. Not only can they be equally effective and gentler on clothes and the environment, but they can also be healthier and more pleasant to use. Another bonus is the fact that they are routinely much more cost effective as well!

### GENERAL CLEANING:

#### Use:

- White vinegar – use to clean windows, counter tops, chrome, grease, floors, etc.
- Baking soda — absorbs odors; good for cleaning ovens, sinks, etc.
- Lemon juice— cleans windows, sinks, grease, etc.
- Vegetable oil, lemon oil — can be used as a furniture polish
- Borax — for cleaning toilets, tubs, floors.
- Plant-based dish soaps.
- There are also a growing number of commercially available, less-toxic products on the market. Canadian products that have

been certified as safer for human health and the environment have an Ecolabel (three doves intertwined to form a maple leaf.)

#### Tips for use:

- To clean your oven, sprinkle with baking soda, spray with water and leave on for 12 hours, re-spraying the water periodically. Scrub until clean.
- To open a clogged drain, use baking soda followed by boiling water or vinegar.
- Borax disinfects, deodorizes, kills mould and mildew, and also whitens laundry – it can be found in the detergent aisle. This should be used sparingly, as it too can be toxic in high doses.
- Try using herbs and spices or boiling a lemon instead of using commercial air fresheners.
- For an all-purpose cleaner, use a 50:50 mix of water and white vinegar.
- To save time, make your cleaners in advance
- Label all ingredients, and keep them out of reach of children. Wear rubber gloves when cleaning. Even though products are environmentally safe, they make still irritate the skin of sensitive individuals.

#### Products to use sparingly or avoid:

- Window and floor cleaners containing ammonia
- Drain cleaners containing sodium hydroxide
- Commercial air fresheners
- Aerosol products

Anything with added fragrances or dyes

#### LAUNDRY:

##### Use:

A mixture of one cup soap flakes, 1/2 cup borax and 1/2 cup washing soda as a laundry soap

Sodium perborate or hydrogen peroxide as chlorine-free, natural bleaching minerals

White Vinegar - 1/2 to one cup in rinse cycle to soften clothes and remove odors and residual detergent (instead of fabric softener) Less-toxic commercial laundry products - look for ones that have been certified as safer, and carry an Ecolabel

#### Other tips:

- If you feel you still want to use a "regular" detergent, try one of the commercial products that are scent-free. Instead of dry cleaning clothes, try hand washing or "wet cleaning," a relatively new procedure that doesn't use perchlorethylene (PERC), a strong irritant that is known to be a neurotoxin and carcinogen at higher doses.

# Alternatives to Common Household Products

## Product cautions:

- Detergents with dyes, perfumes and chlorine
- Chlorine bleach
- Commercial fabric softeners
- Dry Cleaning (contains a chemical called PERC)

## PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS:

### Use:

- Shampoo — unscented shampoos with natural Ingredients
- Soap — unscented glycerin soaps or other unscented natural skin cleansers
- Deodorants — mineral crystal stones or salts, or unscented commercial deodorants
- Toothpaste – salt crystals, baking soda or tea tree oil toothpaste.
- Moisturizers — Plain almond oil, olive oil or cocoa butter, or use unscented, hypoallergenic products.
- Dusting powder — cornstarch or French Clay powder (available in health food stores).

- There are also many other commercially available non-toxic products on the market.

## Products that may be irritating:

- Products with perfumes or dyes
- Aerosol spray deodorants
- Hairspray

## Tips to try:

- For a natural hair conditioner, work a small amount of olive oil into your hair until it is coated. Cover your hair with a shower cap and leave on for 30 minutes. Shampoo and rinse as usual. For a homemade hair gel, try dissolving one package of unflavored gelatin into two cups of hot water. Store in a glass jar in the refrigerator.



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**"your health is your Wealth"**

**Tannaz Mokhtari is a licensed and registered Naturopathic Doctor practicing in Richmond Hill. Tannaz recognized the need for an individualized and patient – centred care, focusing on the root cause of the problem and treatment based on the least harm to the body. She is holistic in her approach, placing the patient’s needs and wellbeing as her first priority. She is passionate about providing care for her patients and is fully devoted to their well being.**

**Tannaz specializes in Women’s health issues, however she welcomes all individuals who seek health and true healing.**

**To book an appointment please see Dawn or call**

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