

OIAQC exists to promote healthy indoor air in Ohio and to promote optimum public health through education, advocacy, technical support and agency collaboration. OIAQC is a group of state and local health departments, organizations and public and private partners focused on improving indoor air quality for all citizens of Ohio.

Air Cleaners and Your Health

Why do I need to clean the air in my home?

Many things in the air in your home may hurt your health:

Pollen from the outside	Dust
Odors	Lead
Bacteria	Mold spores
Smoke	Chemicals

Infants, young children, and people with lung disease will be more affected than others.

How do I keep the air in my home clean?

The best way to keep your indoor air clean is to keep pollutants out!

- Air out new items before you bring them into your home. This includes things like: *vinyl products like shower curtains, furniture, carpet, dry cleaning.*
- Clean with simple products like white vinegar, baking soda, oil soap and water.
- VOCs are the harmful gases that many products give off. If you must purchase a toxic product, buy low odor, low VOC, or no VOC and buy only the amount you expect to use.
- Open windows to reduce indoor pollution levels.
- Close your windows when outdoor air pollution levels are high.

Are air cleaners effective for smoke removal?

- Smoke only outside your home - no air-cleaning device will stop the health risk from second-hand smoke!

Are there laws to protect my indoor air?

- No laws exist in Ohio for indoor air quality in the home.
- You must decide how to keep your indoor air "clean".

Before you buy an air cleaner try these things first:

- **Vacuum** with a HEPA filtered vacuum cleaner or use a micro-filtration or allergen vacuum bag.
- **Vacuum** twice a week in the bedroom and once a week in other areas, including cloth covered furniture
- **Dust** once a week.
- **Wash** sheets and blankets every week in hot water.
- **Keep** humidity levels under 50%.
- **Replace** the furnace filter regularly with a pleated filter.
- **Look** at other important steps at <http://www.noattacks.org>.

Using an air cleaner will not cut down on the need to clean your home.

What kinds of air cleaners can I get for my home?

Healthy

- High efficiency particle air (HEPA) filter cleaners.
- Air filtering cleaners (Not as good).

Not Healthy

- Ionizers
- Air Purifiers that produce ozone.
- Filter cleaners (may be HEPA) with an ionizing or ozone generating feature.

Ozone and ionizer air cleaners may be harmful to human health.

What is ozone?

- Ozone is a common outdoor air pollutant during the warmer months.
- Outdoor ozone limits are set by the government and warnings are issued to the public when outdoor levels are high.
- Using an ozone generator indoors can cause ozone levels in the home that are higher than levels outdoors. Even higher than the box says.

Can ozone and ion air purifiers clean the air in my home?

NO: Consumer Reports has studied both and reports that air purifiers that make ozone do not remove:

- Dust, pollen or other particulates.
- Viruses, bacteria, mold, or other biological pollutants.
- Odor causing chemicals.

Can ozone cause cancer?

- Ozone in your home can combine with other chemicals in your home to form cancer causing chemicals. Some of these are:
 - The perfumes from plug in air fresheners.
 - Fumes from new furniture.

Can ozone cause other health problems?

- Ozone is a gas that can cause health problems such as eye and lung irritation, and breathing difficulty.
- When inhaled, ozone can damage the lungs.
- Small amounts of ozone can cause chest pain, shortness of breath, and throat irritation.

- Ozone can worsen chronic lung diseases such as asthma and weaken the body's ability to fight respiratory infections.
- Ozone limits your sense of smell so you can not smell other odors any longer.

Be careful about what you buy—

- Even “air purifiers” with *seals of approval* have been shown to have health risks.
- Many are ozone generators.

How do I choose the right air cleaner?

- Measure the room where you will put the air cleaner.
- Multiply the length by the width to get the number of square feet in the room.
- Match the square feet in your room to the amount of space the air cleaner will clean.
- If you buy an air cleaner that is too small for your room it will not clean the air well.
- If possible buy an air cleaner with a HEPA filter.

Internet Resources

American Lung Association. *Residential Air Cleaning Devices*, 1997; www.lungusa.org.

California Department of Health Services, *Health Hazards of Ozone-generating Air Cleaning Devices*, 1998; www.cal-iaq.org/o3_fact.pdf.

Consumer Reports. *Ionizing Air Cleaners*, May 2005; www.consumerreports.org

US Environmental Protection Agency, *Residential Air Cleaning Devices: A summary of available information*, 1990; www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/residair.html

Local Information: