



HOME HEALTH TIPS: INDOOR AIR QUALITY IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOUR HEALTH THAN YOU MAY REALIZE...

By John Conway

Summer-cleaning is in the air! At least it *should* be, literally, if you're concerned about your health. In today's air-tight homes, Indoor Air Quality is a growing concern. Most household dust contains bacteria, viruses, cleaning chemicals, dust mites, mold, mildew, pollen, animal dander and other contaminants, just to name a few. We breathe these toxins and allergens daily, as they circulate through the central air systems in our homes and offices. These can aggravate asthma, allergies and other upper-respiratory illnesses.



JUST THE FACTS:

- For the second year running, Memphis ranked second among the 100 "most challenging places to live for asthmatics in the nation," due to lack of air quality efforts (The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America).
- The EPA claims indoor air has been found to be up to 70% more polluted than outdoor air (EPA).
- The average 6-room house collects 40 pounds of dust a year (Discover Magazine).
- Air ducts have more germs than a chicken coop (American Lung Association).
- 9 out of 10 heating, ventilating, air conditioning system failures are caused by dust and dirt (Louisiana Coop. Extension Service).



Pollen spores (magnified 1500 times)

If you are concerned by the alarming facts above, there are several low-cost ways to combat these invisible health 'enemies,' such as air-duct cleaning, high efficiency filtration and coil cleaning.

- ✓ Air-duct cleaning minimizes microbial growth such as mold and bacteria in your duct system. This method is often used when people have allergies, or are moving into a previously occupied home. It is also quite effective in eliminating odors from within the duct work. Regarding tabletop and gadget air cleaners – Don't buy them! According to an American Lung Association report, "The reviewed data provide little reason to endorse the use of inexpensive tabletop, appliance-type air cleaners, regardless of the technology they employ."
- ✓ High efficiency filtration is another solution toward improving the cleanliness of your indoor air. There are a number of filter options available today, tailored to suit your individual needs.
- ✓ When dirty air passes through the evaporator coil on your air conditioner, it can build up and reduce the performance and life of your equipment. It can also provide an environment for bacterial growth. Coil cleaning twice a year can help to eliminate build up of dirt, while also dramatically improving the efficiency and life of your air conditioner.

In summary, we recommend a whole-house approach toward cleaner, healthier air. What's appropriate for your home depends on your budget, comfort system and family. For more information, contact a reputable heating and air company, and be sure to check references.



John Conway is owner of Conway Services Heating & Cooling. Established in 1990 as a family-owned business, the company recently was named "Business Professional of the Year," by the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home. For more information, call: 384-3511