How Ventilation Improves Indoor Air Quality

Learning ways to improve your home's air quality may help you breathe easier. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air pollution is among the top five environmental risks to public health. Fortunately, ventilation systems and air cleaners can improve your home's indoor air quality (IAQ) by replacing a portion of stale indoor air with fresh outdoor air. For example, Energy Recovery Ventilators (ERVs), Electronic Air Cleaners (EACs), UV lights and whole house humidifiers such as those from Coleman Heating and Air Conditioning, a brand of the Unitary Products Group of York-a Johnson Controls Company-are designed to ventilate the indoor air, zap airborne germs and pollens, trap airborne particles, and moisturize parched air. The ERV units retain a portion of the energy used to heat or cool the house, saving on utility bills. EACs can remove up to 94 percent of the particles, including dust, pollens, pet dander, plant spores, fungi, bacteria and tobacco smoke. Humidifiers help to keep the occupants healthy by providing much needed moisture during the dry winter months and can help increase indoor comfort. To further ensure good IAQ, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers recommends these 10 tips:1. Vent bathrooms, kitchens, toilets and laundry rooms directly outdoors.2. Avoid locating furnaces, air conditioners and ductwork in garages or other spaces where they can draw contaminants into the house. 3. Properly vent fireplaces, wood stoves and other hearth products. 4. Vent clothes dryers and central vacuum cleaners directly outside. 5. Store toxic or volatile compounds, such as paints, solvents, cleaners and pesticides, out of occupyable space. 6. Minimize or avoid unvented combustion sources, such as candles, cigarettes, indoor barbecues, decorative combustion appliances or vent-free heaters. 7. Provide operable windows or additional mechanical ventilation when using home cleaners or painting. 8. Use sealed-combustion, power-vented or high-efficiency condensing-type water heaters and furnaces. When natural-draft applications must be used, they should be tested for proper venting.9. Put a good particle filter or air cleaner in your air-handling system to keep dirt out of the air and off of your ductwork and heating and cooling components. 10. Distribute a minimum level of outdoor air *here* throughout the home, using whole-house, mechanical ventilation.

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