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Inferi-Air

Cleaner indoor air quality can relieve allergies and prevent illnesses

Cleaning the air in your home may be more important this spring than cleaning the windows or floors, especially if you are part of the 75 percent of Americans who live with someone who has allergies, asthma, emphysema or other respiratory illnesses.

Poor indoor air quality is one of the top five environmental risks to public health, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA says the air inside your home can be two to five times worse than it is outdoors. Pollen, pet dander, smoke, dust mites, mold and other potentially harmful micro-particles all contribute to the problem.

“Indoor air pollution is a major health concern for all Americans — especially for the 46 million with allergies and asthma,” says Ian Greaves of the American Lung Association. “The best way to reduce the health risk is to reduce your exposure.”

The association recommends an annual inspection of your system by a trained professional as well as changing your heating/air-conditioning filter every two to three months. Statistics show that 30 percent of Americans have never had their systems inspected and 10 percent have never changed the filter.

“Regular and proper maintenance of your heating and cooling system can go a long way in improving your indoor air quality,” says Joe Lambert of Grandview-based United Heating & Cooling. “Homes today are being built tightly — meaning that chemicals and allergens like pollen, dust and mold can get trapped indoors. Changing your filters regularly helps, but all filters are not created equal, and if you suffer from allergies or asthma, you might want to consider a separate air filtration system to really combat the problem.”

A whole-house filtration system generally collects a wider range of pollutants — standard filters capture only 15 percent of airborne pollutants — and can offer up to 99 percent effectiveness at removing pollen and spores, thus providing allergy relief. Another benefit is that the removal of dust and other contaminants can increase the efficiency of your furnace or air conditioner by 10 percent to 25 percent.

Glossary of terms

- ★ **Energy recovery ventilators** — “Fresh air intake” systems that can be incorporated into your central system exchange stale inside air for fresh outside air and help manage humidity year-round
- ★ **Media filters** — Attached to your heating/cooling system, these thick filters — four times thicker than standard filters — remove allergy-causing particles like pollen, spores and dust and reduce contaminant build-up in the system
- ★ **Electronic air cleaners** — Installed at your existing heating or cooling system; particles pass through an electrode and then are collected on a grounded filter
- ★ **Ultraviolet lights** — Installed near the air-conditioning coil, a UV germicidal lamp reduces airborne bacteria and viruses by flooding the system with disinfecting ultraviolet light

—Compiled by Doug Worgul *The Star*