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Steve Ramos is available for interviews.

IMPROVING INDOOR AIR QUALITY IQ AT HOME

House Detective Steve Ramos Helps ‘Clear the Air’ In and Around the Home

ST. PAUL, Minn. – April 24, 2009 – Think you know what contributes to allergens in the home? While most people look to the obvious for prevention - dusting surfaces, cleaning countertops and vacuuming carpeting – many don’t realize there are other home cleaning and maintenance tasks that can directly impact your home’s indoor air quality (IAQ).

“Having a high IAQ IQ is really about knowing what things in your home directly affect indoor air quality and how to help prevent them from starting or spreading,” said Steve Ramos, featured home inspector on HGTV’s *House Detective*. “Most people are unaware that making simple changes and keeping up with home maintenance can help substantially improve your indoor air quality.”

People can follow these 4 C’s – ***Control, Change, Close and Clean*** – from House Detective Steve Ramos to help homeowners improve their IAQ IQ:

CONTROL

Controlling mold, pet dander, dust mites and other allergens from entering or spreading throughout the home is the number one step to a better IAQ IQ:

- Leave shoes at the door to limit tracking allergens from the outdoors into the home
- Help prevent mold growth by keeping the relative humidity between 30-50 percent
- Increase airflow and help control humidity levels by moving furniture away from walls and opening closet doors
- Use a high gloss, washable wall paint with mold inhibitor on walls and ceilings in the bathroom
- Block dust mites by covering your mattresses, box springs and pillows with special casing
- Identify known outdoor allergen sources and remove them from landscaping around the home

CHANGE

Changing items in the home such as carpeting and furnace or air filters can have a drastic impact on your indoor air quality. These changes can make a big difference in reducing allergens in the home:

- Replace carpet with hard surface flooring that can be damp mopped
- Upgrade air filters to a high-performance filter, such as the Filtrete 1” Advanced Allergen filter, which captures at least 90 percent of large airborne particles from the air as it passes through the filter
- Change air filters every three months or according to manufacturers’ recommendations. An easy way to remember is to change filters on the first day of every season
- Cheap vacuum bags can stir up allergens when vacuuming so replace vacuum bags with one that contains a HEPA filter
- On a semi-annual basis, remove and replace all caulking around windows, siding transitions, and other areas where pipes or mechanical parts penetrate the exterior walls to help prevent mold growth

CLOSE

Close any gaps that allow pollutants or water to help spread in the home. Pay specific attention to the kitchen, bathrooms and areas that surround the home to ensure condensation or standing water doesn't lead to mold growth:

- In the kitchen, make sure the exhaust fan is connected to a duct that goes to the exterior of the home so pollutants don't enter the home
- Showers, especially in smaller bathrooms, can raise the humidity levels and can create condensation on walls and ceilings, so install and utilize an exhaust fan in the bathroom
- Only install hard surface flooring in bathrooms and maintain a good seal where flooring meets tubs and showers so water doesn't pile up
- A leaky roof increases the probability that mold will grow in the home, so seal around all vents, skylights and chimneys
- Ensure all downspouts drain to a pipe that carries the water away from the home by at least six feet or leads to a street gutter system that drains to a storm drain

CLEAN

The final element to helping improve indoor air quality is cleaning – wiping down surfaces, washing bedding and cleaning areas that are often dark and hidden. These household chores will help you breathe cleaner air in the home:

- Clean the grease filter above the stove and the dust build up that collects on refrigerator coils
- Regularly wash bedding and linens at high heats - approximately 140 degrees Fahrenheit - to help keep dust mites from collecting on your bedding
- Dust blinds and wash curtains on a regular basis
- Bathe and groom your pets on a regular basis to help keep pet dander at bay
- Clean your gutters and downspouts on a semi-annual basis to help prevent standing water or dampness around the home

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About Steve Ramos

Steve Ramos is the co-host for Home and Garden Television's (HGTV) *House Detective* and has appeared in more than 100 episodes of the show. In each segment, Steve takes homeowners on a tour of their home and using the latest hi-tech gadgets shows the good, the bad, and the downright ugly. Steve is a Certified Home Inspector, Certified Building Science Thermographer and a Mold Specialist.

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