

Health Bulletin

Reducing Allergens In The Home

(NAPSA)—Did you know that how you decorate your home can have a dramatic effect on your health? In fact, soft surfaces like carpets and thick pile rugs can trap some of the most common allergens found in our homes—pet dander, dust mites and pollen.

According to the American Lung Association (ALA), controlling a home's environment to reduce allergen levels is important for managing allergies and asthma. In existing homes, simple changes can improve indoor air quality dramatically.

Installing hardwood floors are among the healthiest choices for controlling allergens like pollen, pet dander and dust mites in the home. Hardwoods are also easier to clean than carpet and keep vacuuming to a minimum, says the ALA, a fact not lost on hardwood flooring experts.

"We know that about 40 million Americans are affected by allergies," says Randal Weeks, product manager for Bruce hardwood floors.

Said Weeks, "If you're one of them, you know you'll try just about anything to alleviate the symptoms. Fortunately, one of the easiest ways is to install hardwood floors. They are a beautiful part of the solution to a miserable problem."

In fact, installing hardwood floors may help prevent children from developing allergies and asthma entirely, according to a recent study issued by the University of Southampton.

The Southampton study says carpets are the biggest reservoir for dust mites and pet allergens in the home. Dust mites have been



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linked to asthma, hay fever, and other diseases. Because infants and children spend more time in close contact with the floor, their increased exposure to domestic allergens can lead to the development of respiratory disease later in life, according to the report.

Fortunately, hardwood floors can be found to meet a variety of budgets. "Because of their durability, hardwood floors can be a more economically sound choice for a lot of families, says Weeks. "For one thing, hardwoods don't need replacing like other surfaces—they're for life. Plus, hardwood floors actually increase the value of homes."

Since hardwoods come in a variety of face grades, styles, finishes and species, prices range widely. Generally speaking, factory-finished hardwood floors can start at \$5 per square foot uninstalled.

"Factory-finished hardwoods eliminate the need for sanding and finishing in the home," says Weeks. "This further reduces the introduction of dust and fumes—two common allergens which are high on the list of indoor air pollutants."

Editor's Note: This article is the second in a series.