Understanding Our Environment

Clearing The Air—The Facts About Ozone And Living Green

(NAPSA)—More and more Americans are becoming environmentally conscious and expressing interest in "green" living. So, it's no wonder that a growing number of people are turning to indoor air quality products to help improve the air they breathe in their homes and reduce indoor air pollution.

In fact, millions of portable ionic air purifiers (single-room units that use electrically charged plates to attract airborne particles) and electronic air cleaners (air filters that trap airborne particles using an electrical field) are sold each year.

However, many consumers may not realize that a number of these types of indoor air quality products could actually be adding to the pollution in their homes. According to a study funded by the National Science Foundation, some ionic air purifiers can produce detectable levels of ozone, which is a known lung irritant. Other studies have shown that electronic air cleaners also produce harmful ground-level ozone.

According to the American Lung Association, ozone exposure may lead to shortness of breath and chest pain when inhaling deeply.

A recent study by Dr. Richard Corsi, an indoor air quality expert, revisited the current science behind acceptable indoor ozone concentrations and ozone release rates.

"While ground-level ozone and outdoor air pollution have long been a concern in many parts of the country, we're learning more and more that ozone emissions indoors can also be a problem. In

fact, studies have shown that exposure to elevated ground-level ozone can irritate the upper respiratory system, decrease lung function and increase the number of asthma attacks," said Corsi.

"Consumers who may be shopping for an air cleaner should do some research and check with the product manufacturer to determine if the air cleaner they're considering produces ozone, and specifically look for products that are labeled 'ozone-free.'"

For example, Lennox Industries recently announced that it has developed the heating and cooling industry's first comprehensive line of residential indoor air quality products that do not produce ozone. The company's ozone-free Healthy Climate product line includes air purification systems, media air cleaners and high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters as well as other products, and none of them emits harmful ground-level ozone.

In fact, the Lennox PureAir air purification system, a whole-home indoor air quality system that is easily integrated into an existing central heating and cooling system, can actually reduce ozone levels in the home. The PureAir system also eliminates airborne pollutants like pollen, dust and pet dander; removes biological pollutants like viruses and bacteria; and destroys unwanted odors and chemical vapors, such as pet odors and paint fumes.

To learn more about improving the air you breathe and creating a healthier home, visit www.ItPaysToLiveSmart.com.

The Facts On Ozone

- Ozone is a form of oxygen and can be both good and bad. It occurs naturally in Earth's atmosphere—10 to 30 miles above Earth's surface—and helps block the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays. At lower levels of the atmosphere—the air humans breathe—it's a product of pollution, commonly known as smog.
- While ozone in the upper atmosphere occurs naturally, ground-level ozone is man-made. Many electronic air cleaners and ionizers have been found to produce ozone.
- According to the American Lung Association, ozone exposure may lead to shortness of breath, chest pain when inhaling deeply and wheezing and coughing.
- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that one out of every three people in the United States is at a higher risk of experiencing problems from ground-level ozone.