

## Bad Indoor Air Quality? Try Homeowner And Professional Care

(NAPSA)—Millions of people suffer from headaches, dizziness and irritation of the eyes, nose and throat associated with allergies. These symptoms can be caused by the indoor air quality in their homes. With a few measures, homeowners can enjoy a more comfortable, healthy lifestyle and reduce the level of indoor air pollutants.

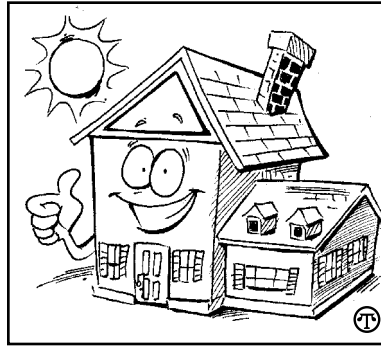
“There are many possible sources of indoor air pollution in any home,” said Pat Murphy, Director of Technical Development for NATE—North American Technician Excellence. “Unfortunately, many homeowners may not be aware of the common signs or know who to call for help,” added Murphy.

Murphy recommends conducting an air quality assessment as the first step homeowners should take to identify potential indoor air problems. Here, Murphy shares signs that can indicate a home may not have sufficient ventilation:

- Condensation on windows or walls
- Dirty central heating or cooling equipment filters
- Smelly or stuffy air
- Areas where books, shoes or other items become moldy

In addition to a home assessment, Murphy recommends taking these steps to improve indoor air quality:

- Use a dehumidifier or air conditioner to keep humidity low in the house.
- Refill humidifiers with fresh water daily and clean them according to manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have a NATE-certified technician service heating and air conditioning systems annually so they don’t become pollution sources.
- Change air conditioning and furnace filters every two or three months or as required by manufacturers.
- Turn on air conditioning so the indoor air circulates through the home and passes through the air filter.
- Ventilate the attic and crawl spaces to prevent moisture build-up.



- Keep windows closed to keep outside pollens from entering the home.
- Make sure the home’s roof and windows are in good shape. Moisture on interior wall spaces can encourage mold growth.
- Thoroughly clean and dry water-damaged carpets or replace them because damp carpet leads to mold growth.

While an indoor air quality assessment is a smart starting point, homeowners should also consult a contractor who employs NATE-certified technicians to schedule a thorough evaluation. NATE is the nation’s largest non-profit certification organization for heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC/R) technicians. A NATE-certified technician is an individual who has demonstrated knowledge and technical skills in the installation and servicing of HVAC/R equipment.

An annual evaluation and proper maintenance by a NATE-certified technician will help ensure that heating and cooling systems are in good working order and may help prevent future health problems and energy inefficiencies.

“Lack of service to heating and cooling systems can drastically impact a home’s indoor air quality. Sometimes increasing ventilation, installing air cleaning devices or unblocking an air supply vent can remedy the problem. The key, however, is to take action before health effects or hazardous activities occur,” said Murphy.

For more information about NATE or to locate a NATE-certified technician nearest you, visit the Web site at [www.natex.org](http://www.natex.org) or call 877-420-NATE.