

## Keep it Ventilated:

Ways to help keep the air quality safe in your home



*Good ventilation means bringing fresh air into your home and getting rid of stale, polluted air. It's essential for maintaining healthy indoor air quality and reducing harmful substances like allergens, tobacco smoke, moisture and gases. Ventilation does hand in hand with proper air filtration.*

### Why ventilation is important:



- Poor indoor air quality can increase the risk of respiratory illnesses.
- Moisture and harmful pollutants can damage your health and the structure of your home.

### What is good ventilation?

- Local exhaust systems (like those in kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, fireplaces and furnaces) help remove moisture, odors and pollutants from the source.
- Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems bring in fresh air, circulate it and filter out contaminants.
- Controlled airflow and filtration help prevent the spread of dust, dirt and pollutants throughout the home.

## Key areas in the home to ventilate:



Kitchen ranges – smoke, grease and gases from cooking



Bathrooms – moisture and mold



Fireplaces and wood-burning stoves – carbon monoxide and smoke



Boilers, furnaces, hot water heaters – combustion gases



Garages – car exhaust



Clothes dryers – lint and moisture (always vent to the outside)

## Fresh air + Filtration = Healthier Air

- Newer homes often have HVAC systems designed to bring in and filter fresh air. Older homes may rely more on open windows and doors for fresh air, making air quality harder to control.
- HVAC systems use filters by rated by MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) – the higher the number, the better the filtration. Always check your system's recommendations before using a high-rated filter.
- Replace furnace and other filters regularly and make sure they are installed properly.
- Do not block HVAC vents with furniture or clutter – this can disrupt airflow.
- HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filters in portable air cleaners can capture very small particles and are considered highly effective.
- Portable room air cleaners can be helpful if they are the right size for the room. Be cautious with ionizers or air "purifiers" – some can release other pollutants. Stick with filter-based models.
- If cost is a barrier to getting a portable air cleaner, check with your insurance provider. You may also be able to build one yourself – see QR code for instructions.

### Learn More!

Check out our other Keep-it Principle factsheets to learn more about how to create a safe and healthy home for everyone in it – including your pets. For more tips and resources, visit the national PEHSU website at [PEHSU.net](http://PEHSU.net).



**MAPEHSU**  
Mid-America Pediatric  
Environmental Health  
Specialty Unit

This fact sheet was supported by the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSUs) which are supported by cooperative agreement FAIN: NU61TS000356 with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ATSDR). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also provides support through Inter-Agency Agreement 24TSS2400078 with CDC/ATSDR. The Public Health Institute supports the PEHSU as the National Program Office. The content in this fact sheet has not been formally disseminated by CDC/ATSDR or the EPA and should not be construed to represent any agency determination or policy. Use of trade names that may be mentioned is for identification only and does not imply endorsement by the CDC/ATSDR or EPA.