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URECC news

for the members of Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation

Stay Fresh: Five Tips for Better Indoor Air Quality



We spend a lot of time indoors. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the average person spends 90% of their life indoors. (I don't know about you, but I suddenly have the urge to go for a long walk!)

Additionally, our homes are becoming more energy efficient—they're better insulated and sealed with less ventilation—which is great for our energy bills but not so much for our indoor air quality.

The thought of breathing in pollutants can be scary, but the truth is, indoor air pollution is common and simply unavoidable. The good news is there are ways you can easily improve the air quality of your home.

Read on for five tips to help you breathe a little easier.

Change your air filter often.

Clogged, dirty filters reduce the amount of airflow and the HVAC system's efficiency. When a filter becomes too clogged, the excess dirt and dust are sent through your air ducts, adding unnecessary allergens and other unwanted particles into your living space. During the cooling season (summer months), the Department of Energy recommends replacing your air filter every month or two. This is one of the easiest ways to promote better indoor air quality and energy efficiency.

Regularly vacuum carpet and rugs—especially if you have furry friends. The cleaner the home, the healthier the home. Vacuuming carpet and area rugs once a week can greatly reduce the accumulation of pet dander and dust inside your home. Frequently clean other areas that collect dust, like drapes, bedding and cluttered areas.

Use vents to remove cooking

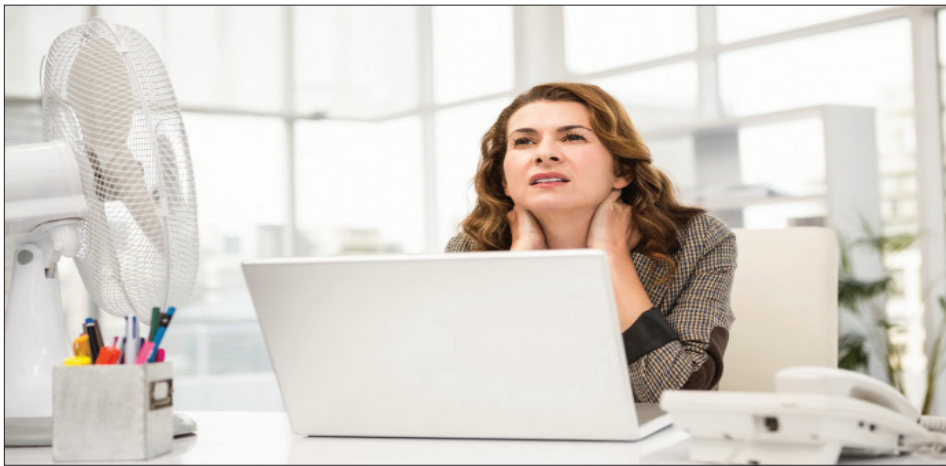
fumes. Those exhaust fans aren't just for when you burn the bacon. Fans help remove fumes emitted while cooking and eliminate unwanted moisture and odors. They may be a bit noisy, but these handy tools can help you improve indoor air quality while you're preparing that culinary masterpiece (or even a grilled cheese sandwich!).

Get a handle on humidity. Summer months typically bring more humidity than we'd like, especially if you live in a high-humidity climate zone. Moisture in the air can carry bacteria and other unwanted particles that you eventually breathe in. Dehumidifiers work to remove that moisture from the air, reducing the amount of bacteria, mold and other allergens in your home.

Incorporate air-purifying plants into your living space. There are several varieties of indoor plants that can help detoxify your home from dust and germs found in a variety of home products, furniture and other materials. A few low-maintenance, air-purifying plants to consider are snake plants, aloe vera plants and pothos plants (also known as Devil's Ivy). These vibrant, lush plants are eye-catching and beneficial for any home. Remember to review care conditions and think about placement for any new plants you add to your home.

Taking simple steps to purify indoor air can improve health and overall quality of life. With a little effort, you can improve the indoor air quality of your home and breathe a bit easier.

Beat the Heat



Summer is officially here and boy is it HOT! Don't let the summer heat burn you on your electric bill. Follow these tips to stay cool and keep extra money in your wallet:

One of the easiest ways to save energy and substantial money on your energy bill is to turn the air conditioning up slightly before you leave the house for an extended period of time.

If you're going out for a few hours in the evening or leaving for work in the morning, nudge up the thermostat a few degrees. It won't take long for it to get back

to normal once you return and turn the dial back a little bit.

People can adjust to an indoor temperature that's slightly less cool in the summer and less warm in winter. If you usually set your a/c at 72, for instance, push it to 74 for a few days until that begins to feel normal. Then, nudge it up one degree a week for a few more weeks and see how far you can go and still feel comfortable.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that if you set the a/c one degree warmer before you go to bed every night you can reduce your cooling bill.

Avoid cranking the a/c way down when you get home from work or from a vacation. Instead, set it back to your normal temperature and let your equipment take time to cool the air. It won't take long and it will waste less energy than forcing a surge of cold air into the house.

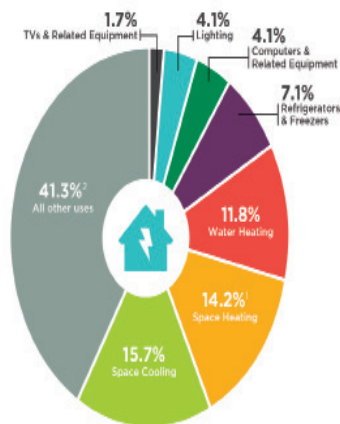
Use your ceiling fans when the a/c is turned on. The fans help circulate the cool air, which makes the room feel more comfortable. Then you can turn the a/c temperature a couple of degrees higher.

A programmable thermostat can also take some of the heat off of you by handling all the temperature settings. You can program it to set the a/c up a few degrees at bedtime and return to normal half an hour before your alarm goes off. You can also "tell" it to keep the temperature constant on weekends, but to save energy on work days.

We hope you are able to keep cool and save money this summer by using some, if not all, of these energy tips! You can find more energy saving tips on our website, urecc.coop.

How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for the largest percentage of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: Energy Information Administration 2021

Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.
Excludes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.

Chicken Bacon Ranch Wraps

from iwashyoudry.com

Ingredients:

- 4 large tortillas
- 8 oz. deli sliced chicken breast
- 8 strips thick cut bacon, cooked crisp
- 2 cups lettuce leaves
- 1/2 cup diced tomatoes
- 4 tbsp ranch dressing

Directions:

Lay tortilla out on plate, top with 1/2 cup lettuce leaves in center of tortilla. Top with 2 tbsp diced tomatoes, 1 tbsp ranch dressing, 2 strips cooked bacon and 2 oz chicken breast.

Roll up tortilla tightly and cut in half. Enjoy

