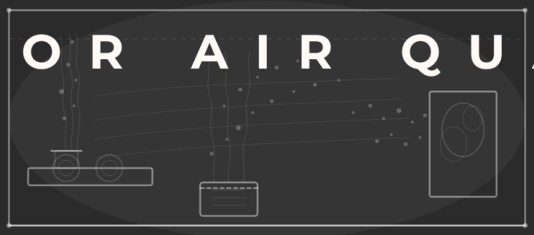
8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT

# INDOOR AIR QUALITY



Healthy Homes Factsheet Series
by Warmer Homes

## INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

A US study found that indoor air can be 2 to 5 times more polluted than outdoor air — and NZ homes are no exception. We spend around 70% of our time indoors.

## THREE POLLUTANT TYPES

- Biological pollutants (mould spores, dust mites, pet dander);
- Chemical pollutants (VOCs from paints, cleaning products, building materials);
- Combustion pollutants (carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter from heaters and cooktops).

## COMBUSTION HAZARDS

Wood burners, unflued gas heaters and gas cooktops release combustion by-products into your home. Carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter are all associated with respiratory and cardiovascular health impacts, making ventilation even more important where these appliances are used.

## MOULD SPORES

Mould releases microscopic spores into the air that can trigger asthma, allergies and respiratory infections — particularly in children, the elderly and people with pre-existing conditions. Visible mould in a home is a clear sign of an air quality problem.

## HUMIDITY & ALLERGIES

Dust mites are one of the most common triggers for asthma and allergic rhinitis in NZ. They live in bedding, carpets and soft furnishings, and their populations can explode with enough humidity. Managing moisture levels is an effective way to manage them.

## VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS

New furniture, carpets, paints, adhesives and cleaning products all release VOCs — chemicals that can cause headaches, eye irritation and longer-term health effects with sustained exposure. Good ventilation is the primary mitigation strategy.

## EASY SOLUTIONS

Improving indoor air quality can be simple. Ensure good ventilation, use extractor fans, manage moisture, reduce pollutants, and maintain a schedule for dusting and cleaning filters.

## CHILDREN MORE IMPACTED

Children breathe more air relative to their body weight than adults, and their developing respiratory and immune systems are more vulnerable to pollutants. A child growing up in a damp, mouldy home has a significantly elevated risk of developing asthma and other chronic conditions.

**This factsheet is provided by Warmer Homes.**
We hope that by reading our factsheets you will learn some useful ways to make your home warmer, drier and more comfortable to live in. Learn more at warmerhomes.nz

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