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News You can Use

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Thank You for your trust and continued support.

Glenn

Indoor Air Quality

Clean air is essential for good health and well-being, this is especially true when it comes to indoor air.

During the cold winter months we have a tendency to hibernate - **spending close to 90% of our time indoors** - we also make our houses air-tight in an effort to increase energy efficiency and decrease heating costs. This is when the air quality inside our homes (and workplaces) becomes an issue deserving of attention.

Reducing heat losses and conserving energy in our homes is very important but this must be accomplished while maintaining sufficient ventilation to provide good air quality. When indoors we are exposed to whatever airborne pollutants are present in our home (or workplace).

The level of toxicity of a substance is based on its concentration, the duration, and the frequency of exposure. The concentrations of airborne contaminants present indoors are generally at low levels and do not pose a health hazard. However, inadequate ventilation can **increase** the concentrations of these pollutants and this is when they can become a problem. There are many sources of indoor air pollution - any combustion source in your home produces air pollution; oil, gas, and wood burning heating, cooling and humidifying

systems and devices, all produce pollution to some degree. Household cleaners, cigarette/cigar smoke, air fresheners, building materials, carpeting, electronics, home furnishings, as well as outdoor sources, all contribute to indoor air pollution. If indoor air quality becomes a problem it may have immediate or long term health effects. Some immediate symptoms include nose, eye and throat irritation, dizziness, fatigue and headaches. While long term effects can be as severe as asthma, heart disease, cancer and other respiratory diseases.

To provide good air quality in your home you must ensure adequate ventilation. Ventilating your home is achieved through either mechanical or natural sources. Even if your home has mechanical ventilation systems, (ie: kitchen/bath/attic exhaust fans, air exchanger etc.) take every opportunity to open a window or door to ventilate and refresh air naturally. Exhaust fans also aid air circulation in your home.

Pay special attention to ventilation when cooking, using cleaning and other chemical products, using a fireplace or woodstove, painting, staining or refinishing furniture - generally, any activity in which you are releasing detectable odours or particles into the air. ■



For Tips on improving air quality in your home - see Page 3

Greetings!

I'm sending you this Newsletter with hopes that you find it interesting and informative

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Need advice?

Whether you're buying, or selling a home, refinancing, or embarking on a home renovation project - talk with an professional who can provide you with expert advice and explanation.



Tips for the First Time Home Buyer

▶ Apply for a pre-approved mortgage (which is usually good for 90 days). This will set your maximum mortgage amount and interest rate, so you can set your budget before starting to house hunt. It also lets the home-seller know you are serious about buying when you decide to make an Offer to Purchase.

▶ Don't forget to budget for extra expenses, such as moving, major appliances (often the purchase of a home will not include appliances), utility hookups, home-owner insurance - and, if this is your first home - you may also need to budget for some home maintenance equipment; lawn mower, snow-blower, garbage cans, garden tools etc.

▶ Prepare, and budget, for closing costs. Appraisal fees, title insurance, legal fees, survey, land transfer taxes, prepaid property taxes or utilities etc. These costs can really add up and often come as a total surprise (more like a shock) for first time home buyers. It's a good idea to talk to your realtor who can advise you about what to expect, and budget for, with respect to 'closing costs'.

▶ Plan on including the cost of a 'home inspection' in your budget. Avoiding any unexpected costs - like a new roof, is well worth the expense. Your realtor will advise you on how to make your Offer to Purchase conditional on the inspection.

Crock Talk *When using a crockpot or slow-cooker, resist the following 4 temptations:*

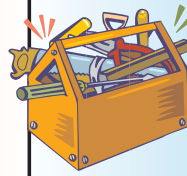
- 1 Don't be tempted to add more liquid.** When you assemble a dish in the slow-cooker, the liquid may not cover the meat, but liquid will increase during cooking as foods release their juices. If you add too much liquid the steam has no way to escape! Be sure to always leave 5cm (2 inches) between the food and the top rim so the food can come to a simmer.
- 2 Try not to continually stir.** Lifting the lid on a crockpot during cooking results in heat loss, which extends the cooking time (by about 20 minutes per peek!). Lift the lid only when checking for doneness or adding thickeners at the end.
- 3 Don't skip the browning or searing step.** Browning meat helps reduce fat, adds flavour and helps maintain an even cooking temperature. Extra-fatty; beef and pork ribs, and chicken wings, should be broiled first to remove all unnecessary fat.
- 4 Don't chop veggies in big chunks.** Root vegetables take much longer to cook than meat, so slice or cut them into small, bite-size pieces. Place them on the bottom of the slow-cooker before adding the meat to keep them submerged during cooking.

Cheesy Italian Tortellini

Prep Time: 15 minutes ~ Cook Time 8 hours
Makes 6 servings...appx 450 calories per serving

- 1/2 kilo (1/2 lb).....ground beef
- 1/2 kilo (1/2 lb).....Italian sausage casing removed
- 1 jar ~ 1/2 litre (16 oz).....marinara sauce
- 1 can ~ 125 grms (4.5 oz).....mushrooms
- 1 can ~ 400 grms (14.5 oz).....Italian-style diced tomatoes undrained
- 1 pkg ~ 250 grms (9 oz).....tortellini fresh or frozen
- 115 grms ~ (1/2 cup).....mozzarella cheese shredded
- 115 grms ~ (1/2 cup).....cheddar cheese shredded

- ▶ *Crumble the ground beef and Italian sausage into a large skillet. Cook over medium-high heat until browned. Drain.*
- ▶ *Combine the ground meats, marinara sauce, mushrooms, and tomatoes in a slow-cooker. Cover, and cook on LOW heat for 7 or 8 hours.*
- ▶ *Stir in the tortellini, and sprinkle the mozzarella and cheddar cheese over the top. Cover and cook for 15 minutes on LOW, or until the tortellini is tender.*



Around the HOUSE



Problem- A nail has popped out of the drywall.

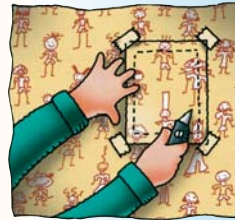
Solution- Replace the nail.

Drive 3cm (1 1/4-inch) drywall screws 5cm (2 inches) above and below the popped nail, dimpling the drywall surface without tearing it. With a nail set and hammer, sink the popped nail 2.5cm (1/16th inch) below the drywall surface. Check that the nailhead and screw heads are counter-sunk by running a putty knife over them. If you hear a clicking sound, drive them in farther. Cover the nail and screws with two coats of joint compound, let coats dry between applications of the compound. Sand with fine-grit sandpaper, prime and repaint the wall.

Problem- Wallpaper is torn or stained.

Solution- Patch the spot.

Cut a patch out of a piece of matching wallpaper at least 2.5cm (1 inch) larger in length and width than the damaged area, making sure the pattern repeats. Place the patch over the damaged spot, matching the pattern on the two pieces. Tape the corners of the patch in place lightly with masking tape. Using a utility knife cut a rectangle larger than the damaged area through both layers of wallpaper. Remove new wallpaper, and peel off the damaged portion of old wallpaper. Moisten the adhesive on the back of the new paper to glue the patch into place.



DownCare



Unlike polyester and synthetic down - which are machine washable and dryable - **natural** down requires a little more tender loving care. First, read the label. While down itself can be laundered, many manufacturers recommend dry cleaning because the outer fabric has a special finish and stitching that may not withstand washing. If you intend to machine wash, use a commercial front-loading machine, which has more room for the comforter or pillow to move freely. Select a short, gentle cycle. Then tumble dry on low heat with several dry towels to absorb excess moisture. Throw in a clean sneaker, which helps prevent the down from clumping. Stop the machine occasionally, turn the comforter by hand to help it dry evenly. If you use a duvet cover, your comforter should only be cleaned once every two to four years.



This 'n THAT

Things you may not know about Snow



- * The largest recorded snowflake was 38cm (15" inches) wide.
- * And, yes, no two snowflakes have exactly the same shape.
- * 'Champagne powder', 'corduroy' and 'mashed potatoes' are terms used by skiers to describe different kinds of snow.

- * Very light snow is known to occur at high altitudes on Mars.
- * It is a popular urban legend that the Inuit have an unusually large number of words for snow. In fact, the Inuit-Aleut languages have about the same number of distinct word roots referring to snow as English does.
- * Appx 12% of the Earth's land surface is covered in permanent snow and ice.
- * The average snowflake is made up of 180 billion molecules of water.

* 25cm (10 inches) of snow is equivalent to 2.5cm (1 inch) of rain.

* 'Chionophobia' is the fear of snow.

Ever wonder why water doesn't freeze in fire hydrants?

It would if the wrong type of fire hydrant were used. In regions that experience cold weather, 'dry barrel hydrants' are used. These hydrants have operating valves located below the freezing level of the ground, the fire hydrant itself does not contain any water until the valve is opened.

Love Letters

Everyone likes the idea of receiving a love letter, but not many of us know how to go about writing one! While there's no tried and true formula - here are some excellent Tips...

- ➔ The letter is about what *You* have to say - not what Hallmark has to say. Use a nice blank card, or choose good stationery to write your letter.
- ➔ The beginning is the tough part...start with a list of adjectives that describe everything you love about your sweetie - then use the list as a starting point.
- ➔ Point out the length of your relationship and how your feelings have grown. You can compliment the usual subjects; eyes, lips, but in new ways... 'Your smile is the favourite part of my day.'... 'I love to hear you laugh'.... 'When I look at you I....'
- ➔ Do make use of those silly disagreements or everyday annoyances; 'I love you in spite of...your snoring...the mess in the kitchen when you cook...'
- ➔ Have fun with your letter!...write a poem (it doesn't matter if its a bad one), use stickers, paste a photo of the two of you to the card, add a caption or make reference to a special occasion/remembrance etc.

Indoor Air Quality

Continued from Front Page

Here are some tips to help improve the quality of the air inside your home.



Key sources of indoor air pollutants

Biological pollutants like mould, dust mites, bacteria.

Chemical pollutants are gases and particles that come from combustion appliances, tobacco smoke, household cleaners, personal care products, as well as from various building materials.

Ways to reduce indoor air pollution

Eliminate or Limit the Source of the Contaminant

- **No Smoking** indoors.
- **Keep your home dry.** Control humidity levels and fix anything that causes dampness and allows mould to grow.
 - Use an exhaust fan to expel moisture and gases from cooking.
 - Ensure gutters and downspouts are working properly and that water is being directed away from the foundation of your home.
 - Use a dehumidifier in the summer to help control dampness in high-humidity areas of your home.
 - Turn on bathroom fans when bathing or showering.
- **Avoid idling.** Cars, lawnmowers, generators etc. should never be idled in garages - especially in those attached to homes. Keep the door between your garage and home closed.
- **Do it outside!** Activities that generate high levels of pollutants, like painting,

staining, furniture stripping or sanding - move outdoors whenever possible.

■ **Maintenance** is key. Ensure all fuel-burning appliances (furnace, gas stoves, water heaters, fireplaces, chimneys etc.) are well maintained and operating properly. Fuel-burning systems should be inspected annually by a qualified professional.

■ **Choose low-emission alternatives.** Paints, cleaning products, glues, air fresheners, insulation, personal grooming products, carpets, fabrics and other products are all sources of indoor air pollution - make informed choices.

Ventilate your Home

A lack of ventilation, especially in air-tight buildings, has a major impact on the quality of indoor air.

✓ **Open windows and doors.**

Regularly refresh the air in your home by opening windows and doors.

✓ **Use kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans.**

These fans remove excess moisture and pollutants directly from the room where they are created.

✓ **Mechanical systems.**

Do some research - numerous systems are designed to bring fresh air indoors and vent stale air to the outside. They also assist in circulating air and controlling temperature and humidity levels throughout your home.

Bath Ideas

If you want to make some changes in your bath without spending a lot of money...here are some quick and easy ideas!

- Frame a wall mirror with tiles.
- Is storage a problem? Attach folding shutter doors to a shallow bookcase that will fit in a small space.
- Hook up new faucets that enhance your decor.
- Let in light, but maintain privacy by hanging a stained-glass panel over your window. Find vintage stained glass at a flea market or make your own.
- If several people share a bathroom, use a Shaker-style peg rail, it holds more towels in less space than standard towel rods or bars.
- Colourwash or glaze walls in a small bathroom. The transparency of the top layer of paint creates depth.
- Enhance a vintage or cottage-style bathroom with white beaded-board wainscoting. This works well for a Scandinavian-look as well, simply sheath an entire wall (or walls) in unpainted bead-board panels.



Around the House STAIN Removal Guide

Before attempting to treat a stain - here are a few DON'Ts!

- ✗ Don't rub the stain.
- ✗ Don't fold, bend or wring fabric. This can cause the stain to penetrate more deeply.
- ✗ Don't use heat or hot water on most fabric stains. The stain will set permanently.
- ✗ Don't use cleaning agents in closed, unventilated rooms.
- ✗ Don't sniff cleaning agents or use them near an open flame.
- ✗ Don't store cleaning agents within reach of kids.
- ✗ Don't work on raw metal, wood, plastic or stone surfaces. Cleaning agents ruin these surfaces.
- ✗ Don't use cleaning agents as laundry additives unless deemed safe by the manufacturer.

Adhesive Tape, Glue	Wood Furniture, Floors: Use shaving cream, then wipe with a cloth soaked in cool water. Dry. Wipe with rubbing alcohol. Polish.
Cocoa, Chocolate	Wood Furniture: Apply a solution of hot water with dish-washing liquid. Wipe stain with suds. Rinse.
Grease, Oils, Butter	Leather, Suede, Carpet: Work cornmeal into stain; let sit overnight. Vacuum. Furniture: Use shaving cream. Wipe then dry immediately. Polish.
Ketchup	Wallpaper, Painted Surfaces: Wipe excess, then dab with cloth. Blot with paper towel.
Ink	Wallpaper: Erase gently with gum eraser. Tough stain: wash with solution of 1 part water and 1 part rubbing alcohol; blot.
Iron Rust	Porcelain sinks, tubs and plastic laminate countertops: Mix a paste of lemon juice and borax and rub into stain. Allow to dry. Flush with water.
Mildew	Painted walls: Wash with 1 cup (225mL) bleach, 1 gallon water (4.5L), 1 cup (225mL) liquid laundry detergent. Rinse well. Furniture: Use same solution, bleach reduced to 1/4 cup (56mL).
Mustard	Wood, wallpaper, painted surfaces: Rub shaving cream into stain. Rinse with cool water. Concrete, Brick: Scrub with a mix of hot water and liquid laundry detergent.



Vacation Planning?

Here are a few pre-vacation items you may have forgotten to add to your To Do list!

- ☐ Arrange for snow shovelling and/or driveway plowing.
- ☐ Have a neighbour pick up mail and newspaper delivery.
- ☐ Give your itinerary to at least one relative and/or neighbour.
 - ☐ If you're leaving your vehicle at home, have a neighbour start and move it occasionally so it looks like you're home.
 - ☐ Arrange for pet care.
 - ☐ Set timers on lights in a few interior rooms as well as exterior lights. Also set a radio or TV to go on and off at different times.
- ☐ Energy saving; unplug small electrical appliances, lower furnace thermostat (don't forget to adjust if you have a programable one) turn down the temperature on hot water heater.



Greener Cleaning means cleaner indoor air!

It only stands to reason that many household cleaning products are harmful when you consider that most drain cleaners, oven cleaners, furniture polishes and air fresheners are classed as hazardous waste! With our tightly sealed houses, we contend not only with allergens, like mold, dander and pollen, but also with a haze of fragrances and pollutants that drift from the cleaners we use everyday. **Here are some natural cleaning ideas for your home...**

1 Baking Soda - (sodium bicarbonate) deodorizer and mild abrasive. Derived from a mineral, baking soda is one of the miracle cleansers. Not only does it absorb odours, it acts as an effective but mild abrasive in cleaning sinks, bathtubs and counters. It is nontoxic to humans, inexpensive and versatile.

2 Liquid Soap - (vegetable oil-based, castile, or glycerin) dirt remover. Liquid soap removes dirt by dissolving the oils that bind the dirt to objects. Soaps derived from vegetable oils are better for the earth than detergents derived from petroleum products because they biodegrade in the environment more easily and are made from less polluting ingredients.

3 White distilled vinegar - (acetic acid, usually in a 5% solution) powerful deodorizer, all-purpose natural cleaner, and cleaning rinse. Vinegar dissolves soap film and leftover mineral deposits from evaporated water, repels grease and grime, helps to prevent mold and mildew, and even freshens the air. Essential oils like peppermint and lavender can be added to soften its naturally strong scent.

4 Lemon - (or lime juice) naturally acidic cleaner. Lemon juice is a powerful cleaner for mineral build-up, tarnish and grease.

5 Essential oils - fresh, clean scents and antibacterial actions. Lemon, lavender, peppermint and tea tree oils are all natural scents. Refreshing and even edible, food-grade lemon and peppermint oils can make great cleaning fragrances. For a powerful, superclean smell use tea tree oil, a broad-spectrum antibacterial and fungicide.

6 Salt - grease buster, antibacterial and power cleaner. Salt absorbs oil readily and, combined with water, can destroy any bacteria in its vicinity through a dehydrating action. The least expensive of all the homemade ingredients, it has a variety of cleaning uses, from absorbing grease to cleaning copper.

Caution

Rules when using Natural Cleaners

- ✓ Label your cleaners - include **all** the ingredients and the ratio of the ingredient mix.
- ✓ Store cleaners out of reach of children & pets.
- ✗ Don't use ammonia.
- ✗ **Never, ever** mix commercial products with homemade products.
- ✗ Don't reuse the containers from commercial cleaning products.