

# A QUICK READ ON IS YOUR INDOOR AIR POLLUTED?

## HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOUR INDOOR AIR IS POLLUTED?

Here's a checklist of the 10 main signs of poor indoor air pollution.

### 1. ALLERGIES, SKIN OR BREATHING ISSUES

There are hundreds of indoor air pollutants that can cause our bodies havoc. The main allergens include dust mites, pet hair and skin, mould spores, pollen, chemicals from household products, cigarette smoke, and burning fuel. These pollutants can cause itching, discomfort, dry throat, coughing and breathing issues amongst others.

### 2. POOR SLEEP OR INSOMNIA

Our bodies will not let us sleep through risks to our health. The triggers for poor sleep are pollutants such as allergens, chemicals, smells (urine / ammonia from a nappy for example), high levels of carbon dioxide (due to lack of ventilation), too much moisture in the air (humidity), dry air and excessively high or low temperatures.

### 3. CONDENSATION / DAMP

Water is the number one reason for property damage and decay. Whether you have a leak inside or outside (the roof for example), rising damp, or an excessive condensation problem - if there's unwanted water in your home, it will result in indoor air pollution that can quickly worsen if not fixed immediately.

### 4. HIGH ENERGY BILLS

Heating wet air costs more than heating well-ventilated, drier air. Excessive condensation caused by indoor laundry drying / washing / cooking and poor ventilation will cause the air to feel colder. Unserviced mechanical ventilation systems may also be working harder to clear the air, which will cost more. Humidifiers or air purifiers will also increase energy bills.

### 5. STALE OR STUFFY / MUSTY AIR

Our sense of smell is designed to protect us from risk. If air smells stale or musty, the air quality is bad for us, and needs ventilating. Opening a window and door and airing the room is incredibly important in this scenario. Stale air will contain high levels of carbon dioxide which cause dizziness, headaches, tiredness, lethargy, and mental health problems.

### 6. HEADACHES

Poor air circulation, high carbon dioxide levels and chemicals that evaporate easily into the air (commonly found in paints, solvents, cleaning products, nail varnishes, and fuels) can cause headaches that persist until the air quality improves through ventilation.

### 7. SMELLS - GOOD AND BAD

Pollutants are normally accompanied by a smell. Whether its a fungus, a used nappy or pet deposit, anything with a bad or 'warning' smell should be removed or fixed. Trust your nose. Good smells may be just as bad - fragrance plugs, sprays and candles cause indoor air pollution that causes a risk to our health and wellbeing, so should be avoided.

### 8. EXCESSIVE PET HAIR / DUST

Our beloved pets - even hyper-allergenic breeds, will shed skin known as 'dander' and some hair which can act as an allergen. If an animal is present, the air quality will be impaired to some extent. Shedding pets will impact air quality more than those that don't shed, generally. Excessive dust may also mean air filtration systems aren't working, or regular cleaning is not being undertaken, which reduces air quality.

### 9. MOULD OR MILDEW GROWTH

Any sign of discolouration or changes in texture of surfaces around the home could be a sign of mould or mildew. This can hide behind plaster, wallpaper, behind furniture, or could be very visible, such as black mould on bathroom tile grout or windowsills. Any mould or fungal growth is dangerous to health and should be dealt with immediately from the root cause.

### 10. LOW MOOD / ENERGY LEVELS / OVERWEIGHT

Spending time in a room with poor / no ventilation results in high levels of carbon dioxide, which can make you feel ill, lethargic, low mood and generally tired and fed up. Productivity levels may reduce and the need to find energy through high sugar foods and drinks become attractive. High carbon dioxide levels can impact obesity levels as a result.

Indoor air pollution is known as the 'invisible killer' linked to millions of deaths every year. Over time our homes have become more airtight, and meanwhile the toxic products we bring into our home have become more plentiful.

We must take action to ventilate our homes adequately to protect our health and improve our life quality and expectancy.

Visit [www.indoorairaware.co.uk](http://www.indoorairaware.co.uk) for more information.