

# Healthy Indoor Environments

*Where We Live, Learn and Play*

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## Controlling Asthma

*Written by Becca Stackhouse, FACS Agent, UGA Extension Crisp County*



**Georgia Healthy Housing**  
one change many impacts

### Inside this issue:

- Controlling Asthma
- Sun Safety
- Healthy Home Hacks
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Asthma is a chronic disease that affects an individual's lungs. Episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing can occur. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that over 25 million people, including 5 million children, across the United States are living with asthma.

Did you know that there are changes you can make in your home to reduce your exposure to some asthma allergens? Some common allergens that can trigger asthma attacks include pet dander, mold spores, dust mites, pollen, cockroaches, secondhand smoke, and strong fragrances.

What can you do in your environment? Clean! Get rid of the dirt, pet hair, pollen, pests, mold and smoke that are in your home. Create a regular cleaning routine for your household and assign chores to people in the home. When selecting cleaning products, choose products that don't emit strong fragrances or odors. Better yet, eliminate chemicals and aerosols by using the University of Georgia Extension [Green Cleaning Recipes](#).

Below are some things you can do to reduce the asthma triggers in your home.

- ◆ Eliminate vaping and smoking inside your home
- ◆ Control dust mites by washing all bedding in hot water once a week
- ◆ Clean surfaces with a microfiber wipe or damp cloth
- ◆ Keep indoor humidity below 50%
- ◆ Vacuum carpets, fabric covered chairs, and curtains to help reduce pet hair and dust

There are many allergens, and they vary person to person. Following these tips will help reduce the triggers in your home.

Home Maintenance: Protect Your Investment

### Green Cleaning: Recipes for a Healthy Home

Sharon M. S. Gibson & Pamela R. Turner

<b>ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER #1</b> 3 tablespoon white vinegar ½ teaspoon washing soda ½ teaspoon vegetable oil based liquid soap 2 cups hot water Mix ingredients in spray bottle or bucket. Apply and wipe clean.	<b>NON-ABRASIVE SOFT SCRUBBER</b> ¼ cup borax vegetable oil based liquid soap ½ teaspoon lemon essential oil In a bowl, mix the borax with enough soap to form a creamy paste. Add lemon oil and blend well. Scoop a small amount of the mixture onto a sponge, wash the surface, then rinse well.
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[Green Cleaning](#)



*Image Source: Shutterstock*

## Sun Safety

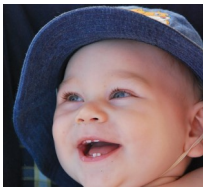
Written by Pamela R. Turner, UGA Extension Housing & Indoor Environment Specialist

It's warming up outside tempting us to spend more time playing and working in the sun. Year around you should be careful about exposing your skin to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. Too much sun exposure can damage your skin and possibly lead to skin cancer. Following a few safety tips will help keep you and your loved ones safe.

### Time of day

Stay out of the sun, or limit your time outdoors, between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM. This is when the sun's UV rays are strongest. If you are outside, seek shade.

### Cover up with clothing, a hat and sunglasses



Your clothes should be loose fitting and made from a tightly woven fabric. New high-tech fabrics are better than unbleached cotton. Also, darker colors may offer more protection. Wear a wide brimmed hat made from a tightly woven fabric (not straw). Make sure the brim goes all the way around. You can purchase "sun safe" clothing. The Skin Cancer Foundation recommends a minimum UPF of 30, which provides good protection from the sun's rays. A UPF of 50 means that the fabric blocks 98% of the sun's rays.

(Image Source: Pixabay)

Remember to wear protective sunglasses. Select sunglasses with 100% UV protection or a UV rating of 400. The wraparound-style frames provide even more protection.



(Image Source: Pixabay)

### Sunscreen

All exposed skin should be covered with sunscreen before going outdoors. The Food and Drug Administration states that an average sized adult or child needs about one ounce of sunscreen (that's about the amount it takes to fill a small shot glass).

The Sun Protection Factor (SPF) should be at least 15, and the label should state that it is a broad spectrum sunscreen. This means that you are protecting your skin from two types of UV rays – UVA and UVB. If you have fair skin, you should select a sunscreen with a SPF of 30 to 50.

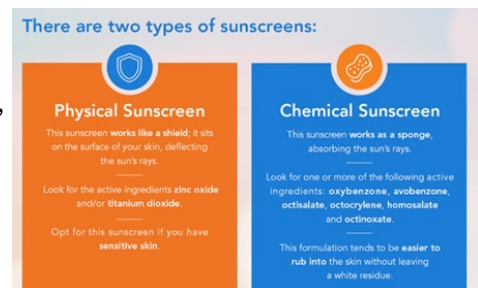
There are two basic types sunscreen – Chemical and Physical or Mineral.

#### Chemical Sunscreens:

- ◆ Absorb the sun's rays
- ◆ Active ingredients are oxybenzone, avobenzone, octisalate, octocrylene, homosalate and octinoxate..
- ◆ Doesn't leave a white residue

#### Physical or Mineral Sunscreens:

- ◆ Deflect the sun's rays
- ◆ Active ingredients are zinc oxide and/or titanium dioxide
- ◆ A good option for people with sensitive skin



(Image Source: American Academy of Dermatology)



Reapply it every two hours, even on cloudy days or if it is water resistant. According to the American Cancer Society, water resistant sunscreen does not mean it is waterproof. And don't use spray sunscreen.

(Image Source: Pixabay)

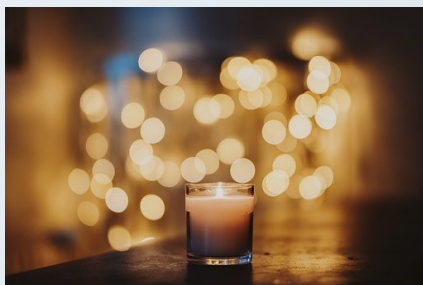
## Healthy Home Hacks

Written by Pamela R. Turner, UGA Extension Housing & Indoor Environmental Specialist

**Broken glass** is easy to pick up with a piece of soft bread.



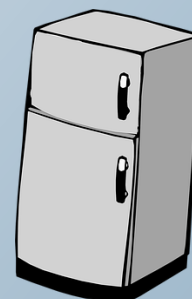
(Image Source: Pixabay)



(Image Source: Pixabay)

**Repurpose candle containers.** Remove the remaining candle wax by placing the container in the freezer for a few hours then lifting the wax and wicks out with a butter knife. Wash and dry. The container is ready for a new use.

**Clean refrigerator door seals** with a solution of 1 tablespoon baking soda and 1 quart of warm water. Use an old toothbrush to scrub the gasket. Rinse with clean water and be sure to wipe off all of the baking soda solution. Check to see if the gaskets are tight by placing a one dollar bill in the door and closing it. If you can easily pull the dollar out, the gaskets are not sealing tightly.



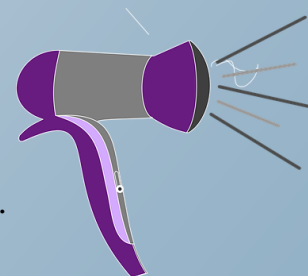
(Image Source: Pixabay)



**Light switch plates** should be cleaned regularly. Use a cotton swab to clean the crevices.

(Image Source: Pixabay)

**Remove water rings on wood** by holding a blow dryer over the area for 10-15 minutes. You can also try rubbing the area with white non-gel toothpaste. Squeeze the toothpaste onto a rag and scrub the area for less than a minute. Because toothpaste is abrasive, start in an inconspicuous area.



(Image Source: Pixabay)



**Wash the shower curtain liner every 3 months.** Adding towels to the washing machine will provide some scrubbing action.

(Image Source: Pixabay)

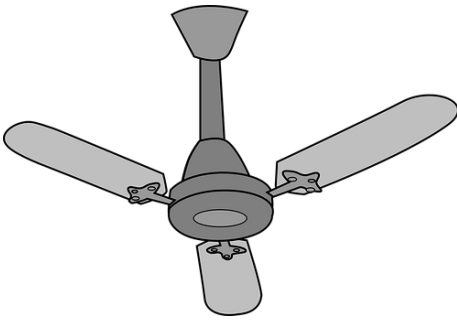
## Keeping Cool With a Ceiling Fan

Written by Pamela R. Turner, UGA Extension Housing & Indoor Environmental Specialist

Sitting under a whirling fan on a hot summer day can make the air that touches your skin feel 4-5 degrees cooler, so you can raise the thermostat by 4-5 degrees and still feel comfortable in the room. Turn up the thermostat, and you will reduce your cooling bill. The rule of thumb is that you will save one percent on your energy bill for every one degree higher you set the thermostat!



(Image Source: Pixabay)



(Image Source: Pixabay)

Now is the time to switch the fan blades to spin counterclockwise. This helps redistribute the air in the room. The room isn't cooler, it just makes you feel the cool air on your skin. That is why it is best to turn off the ceiling fan when there are no people or pets in the room.

A ceiling fan works best when the blades are 7 to 9 feet above the floor and 10 to 12 inches below the ceiling. Select a ceiling fan that is sized for the room you want to cool. Fans that are 52 inch in diameter or more will move a larger quantity of air, and are effective in a 10-foot room, whereas a small or medium sized fan (36 to 44 inches diameter) is most effective in a 4-to-6-foot diameter area.

Save energy by selecting an ENERGY STAR qualified ceiling fan. ENERGY STAR fans with lights are at least 50 percent more efficient than conventional ceiling fans with lights. To learn more about selecting an [energy efficient ceiling fan](#) visit ENERGYSTAR.gov.

Make sure to keep the ceiling fan blades regularly. An easy way to dust them is to place a pillowcase over the blades to capture falling dust.

## Sun Safety Resources

Don't Fry Day—May 27, 2022. Resources and graphics to promote sun safety in your community.

<https://skincancerprevention.org/>

Download the UV index Mobile App

<https://www.epa.gov/enviro/uv-index-mobile-app>



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