

5 Ways to Keep Your Home Healthy this Winter

While the leaves are still changing and some lucky folks still have Halloween candy leftover, winter is right around the corner - in fact, in some areas it's made an early arrival! As temperatures drop and snow storms trap us indoors, there are a few steps you can take to make sure you and your home stay healthy and happy this winter!

1. Set your thermostat accordingly. Keeping your home at the right temperature can protect not only your body, but also your energy bill. Most energy companies recommend anywhere between 68-72 F while you're awake and home, and 62-66 F while you're away and asleep. It's important to experiment with what temperature suits you best, but remember, [keeping your home too cold](#) can exacerbate respiratory conditions like asthma, affect sleep, and worsen arthritis pain.

2. Start cleaning with a HEPA vacuum. Staying inside all winter may lead to build-up of dust and pet dander, which can impact your indoor air quality and exacerbate respiratory issues. If you can, try vacuuming with a [HEPA vacuum](#), which has a level of filtration that will remove smaller particles and pesky allergens, keeping you breathing easy all winter long.

3. Consider replacing your wood stove. Burning wood for heat can release harmful pollutants, threatening the environment and your health. If you choose to burn fuel for heat, consider alternate sources like natural gas. If wood is a must, you might try upgrading to a newer stove with 2020 clean air standards to protect the health of your family and neighborhood. Learn more [here](#).

4. Try natural cleaning products. In-laws coming to visit? Hosting a holiday party? Winter brings many occasions for cleaning, but harsh cleaning products can trigger asthma attacks and reduce the air quality in your home. Try [these recipes](#) for natural cleaners, made from products you likely already have in your pantry!

5. Stay safe while shoveling. Winter home maintenance extends past your front door (and often through a shoveled path to your driveway). Shoveling can be incredibly taxing, especially in extra cold temperatures. As you shovel, try to push the snow instead of lifting. When you have to lift, focus on using the muscles of your legs, not your back. And finally, make sure to allow yourself plenty of breaks to warm up and rest!

Winter presents its own unique challenges, but keeping these tips in mind, you can help your family, your home, and your neighborhood stay warm and healthy in the snow!