

# Better Breathing

A publication of  
**Breathe California**  
of the Bay Area

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## What's Inside?

- ◆ Study: One-third Uses Inhalers Incorrectly, p. 2
- ◆ What are Your Plans for the Future? p. 2
- ◆ Drop in National Smoking Rate Stalls, p. 3
- ◆ Speaker Bio: Susan and Ed Shaw, p. 3
- ◆ Upcoming BBC Meetings, p. 4

## Being Aware of Indoor Air Pollution in Your Home

Source: *Coping with Allergies and Asthma*, YourLungHealth.org and The Environmental Protection Agency

Winter's chilly air tends to keep people indoors, curling up in a blanket and shutting all the doors and windows to keep the cold air out. While it is nice to stay indoors, most homes contain indoor allergens that trigger allergies and create complications for those people who struggle with respiratory problems. Here are some common irritants to be aware of this winter and some tips to reduce your exposure to them.

### Dust Mites

Dust and other indoor irritants can accumulate on the surfaces of appliances. Be sure to thoroughly and frequently clean parts like: heat exchangers, dryer filters, coils on the refrigerator, water pans under the refrigerator, furnaces, and ducts. Also, clean or replace air conditioner and heater filters often. Because dust can also hitch a ride on our clothes and shoes, take off your shoes before entering the house. Do not forget to wash blankets and bedspreads weekly and sheets and pillowcases more often.

### Mold

Mold will grow in any place that moisture accumulates. To control indoor mold, keep bathroom and kitchen surfaces dry and use sheet vinyl instead of vinyl squares for the floors. In cellars, basements and

garages, waterproof the cement floors. Fix leaky plumbing and seal cracks where water can seep. Also, use a dehumidifier to reduce humidity in damp areas.

### Pet Dander

Pet hairs not only cause allergies, but also carry other allergens into your home. Pet owners who have a cat or a dog should wash their pet once a week. Avoid sleeping with your pet. Sleeping with pets increases the amount of contact with unwanted allergens. It is also a good idea to make your bedroom a pet-free zone.

### Cockroaches

The droppings or body parts of cockroaches can cause an allergic reaction. To decrease your exposure to cockroach allergens, remove all food sources and household wastes. Store food in airtight sealed containers. Keep counters, sinks, tables and floors thoroughly clean and clear of clutter.

### Fireplaces

During chilly nights it may be nice to use the fireplace, but wood smoke is serious pollutant. If you do plan on using your fireplace, make sure the chimney is cleaned and properly vented to the outside. Burn only firewood and make sure it is not wet to avoid

## What are Your Plans for the Future?

Do you know:

- That you can support your favorite charities at a cost that is as low as 35% of the value of the gift?
- That there are gifts that enable you to reduce or eliminate taxes and increase your income?
- That some gifts enable you to change your mind and use the money for emergencies if you need it?

For more information visit, contact Steve French at (408) 998-5865 or visit [www.lungsrus.org](http://www.lungsrus.org), Click on "Support Us" and the click on "Tax Wise Giving."

We at Breathe California would be most honored to be a part of your future plans.

## Being Aware of Indoor Air Pollution ...

*Continued from page 1*

smoke and odor problems. Never burn charcoal, paper or treated wood.

Also, never burn on "Spare the Air" nights.

### Study: One-third Uses Inhalers Incorrectly

*News-Medical.net, 10/23/07*

In a new study presented at the 73<sup>rd</sup> annual international scientific assembly of the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP), researchers found 32.1 percent of patients with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) use dry powder inhaler (DPI) incorrectly and that the errors increase with their age and severity of lung obstruction.

The author of the study, Dr. Siegfried Weishammer, MD, and colleagues of the University of Heidelberg in Germany, observed 224 patients with asthma or COPD using one of four common DPIs – Aerolizer, Diskus, Handihaler and Turbuhaler. Patients were asked to evaluate the instructions they received on how to use their inhaler and also to demonstrate their inhalation techniques. Results showed an overall error rate of 32 percent. Of the four inhalers, Aerolizer showed the lowest error rate at 9.1 percent, followed by Diskus at 26.7 percent. Turbuhaler had an error rate of 34 percent and HandiHaler showed the highest error rate at 53.1 percent.

The study showed that receiving previous instruction from medical personnel also had an impact on the error rate. The study also showed increased error rates with age and severity of lung obstruction. Patients under age 60 had a 20 percent error rate, while those 60-years and over had a 41.6 percent error rate. Patients with normal lung function had an error rate of 25 percent, while patients with severe obstruction had an error rate of 63.6 percent.

"The frequent misuse of dry powder inhalers can lead to the inappropriate dosage of medication, which can result in increased morbidity and mortality for patients," said Dr. Wieshammer. "Matching the appropriate device for an individual patient is as important as selecting the drug to be delivered because the best drug remains ineffective if it is not deposited to the lung."

Because DPIs rely on the force of a person's inhalation it is imperative that patients use the right technique. Researchers recommend careful evaluation and examination of older patients' inhalation techniques at every visit in order to ensure the effectiveness of the treatment.

## In the News

Each month, we are proud to bring you some of the latest news affecting lung disease patients. You can also find more news briefs and articles online by visiting:

[www.lungsrus.org](http://www.lungsrus.org)

Click on the News link from the menu bar to reach our newsroom. From there, you can view individual articles by clicking on the "News Briefs" link.

From the Newsroom, you can also read about the agency's latest work in the community. Click on the "Agency News" link to view our latest articles and press releases.

*The following news briefs have been summarized from external sources and have been placed here solely to inform you of the latest in lung health news. Breathe California does not endorse their findings nor have they verified their accuracy.*

## Drop in National Smoking Rate Stalls

*Washington Post, 11/9/2007*

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that the national smoking rate has remained level for the third year in a row, stopping a steady decline enjoyed over the past few decades. This latest stagnation represents the longest period that smoking has not declined since the government started collecting smoking statistics 40 years ago, presenting an alarming picture of smoking patterns.

According to the CDC's report, 20.8% of American adults smoke - 80% of whom smoke everyday. While this smoking rate declined 15% between 1997 and 2004, it has remained level ever since. Even more alarming, smoking rates among high school students have

slightly increased in recent years after a decade of similarly steep decline.

Corinne Husten, head of epidemiology in the CDC's Office of Smoking and Health, reasoned that a number of factors likely contributed to this trend. First, funding for a number of successful state and local anti-tobacco programs has seen cuts in recent years. Secondly, the cost of cigarettes has remained relatively unchanged - one of the strongest factors linked to whether people smoke, especially adolescents. Furthermore, cigarette companies have spent billions in recent years to market their products to the public and offset tax increases.

### Meet This Month's Better Breathers Speakers: Susan and Ed Shaw of Unlimited Wellness International

Susan and Ed Shaw are the owners of Unlimited Wellness International a business that provides products and services that help create a balanced home environment.

Susan is an RN at Stanford University Hospital. A graduate from Georgetown University, Susan has more than 30 years of experience as a critical care nurse in the recovery room at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View.

Ed, an economist, served as a senior office-administrator at Stanford University for more than 27 years. He is also a diabetic and a stroke-survivor.

Together, their business is committed to the concept of the Wellness Home. The Shaw's help their clients create and lead a "living green lifestyle" and help their clients manage health challenges from diabetes, arthritis, and asthma to sleep disorders.

Join Susan and Ed at this month's Better Breathers Club meeting and learn how you can create *The Perfect Wellness Home* for you and your family.

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is a publication of:

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of the Bay Area**  
1469 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95126  
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*As the local Clean Air  
and healthy lungs  
leaders, Breathe  
California of the Bay  
Area fights lung disease  
in all its forms and works  
with its communities to  
promote lung health.*

## Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

**Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 11:00 am to 12 Noon – Gilroy**  
St. Louise Regional Hospital, 9400 No Name Uno  
Speaker: Susan and Ed Shaw, Owners of Unlimited Wellness International  
*The Perfect Wellness Home*

**Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Palo Alto**  
Avenidas Senior Center, 450 Bryant St.  
Speaker: Susan and Ed Shaw, Owners of Unlimited Wellness International  
*The Perfect Wellness Home*

**Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – San Jose**  
Breathe California Offices, 1469 Park Ave.  
Speaker: Susan and Ed Shaw, Owners of Unlimited Wellness International  
*The Perfect Wellness Home*

### A Look Ahead: Our March BBC Meetings

Palo Alto – Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm  
San Jose – Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

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