



National Toxic Encephalopathy Foundation

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According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) we are exposed to risks everyday. EPA studies of human exposure to air pollutants indicate that indoor air levels of many pollutants may be 2-5 times, and on occasion more than 100 times, higher than outdoor levels. These levels of indoor air pollutants are of particular concern because it is estimated that most people spend as much as 90% of their time indoors. Indoor air pollution is one risk that you can do something about.

The purpose of this day is to create less toxic indoor environments. These changes may appear to be minor but will have an impact on everyone's health if followed as recommended.

The cleaning crews are to use only the following the day prior: To dust the desks use a (damp) micro-fiber cloth. If polish is required, they are to substitute the furniture polish with mineral oil.

Carpets are either to just be vacuumed or sprinkled with Arm and Hammer Baking Soda. If at all possible no carpet cleaning is to be done the week of the event. No floor waxing or polishing prior to the day of the event. Floors are to be mopped with water and a mild dishwashing detergent.

There are to be no air fresheners to be used anywhere in the building.

If at all possible reschedule pesticide application. Approximately 15% of the pregnant women they studied may have experienced cumulative organophosphate (OP) pesticide exposures exceeding a health protective value. [1]

The day before, employees are to remove all scented products from their work areas, this includes, pot pourri, candles, etc. Just placing them in a desk drawer will defeat the purpose of this venture. Any canisters of air fresheners are to be removed from the bathrooms.

- the employees will try to be as fragrance free as possible. (It has been proven that fragrances exacerbate those with asthma and are implicated in triggering migraines)
- try to reduce the amount of photocopying and printing (the hotter a printer gets, the more ultra fine particulates go into the air, laser printers released particles of toner-like material which, if inhaled, could travel deep into the lungs where they could pose a health hazard. These particles were as dangerous as inhaling cigarette smoke) [2]
- have a spray bottle of 5% white vinegar in the employees break room to clean off the counters
- wipe their monitor screens with a micro-fiber cloth
- if an employee is prone to migraines or asthma attacks, have them keep a log to see if they are using their inhaler more/less and if they are having migraines (or less severe ones)
- have the employees note if they feel less tired

- remove all ozone generating machines. The ozone to be effective exceeds safe levels. Ozone reacted with chemicals from new carpet, ozone reduced many of these chemicals, including those which can produce new carpet odor. However, in the process, the reaction produced a variety of aldehydes, and the total concentration of organic chemicals in the air increased rather than decreased after the introduction of ozone [3]
- have each employee bring in a sturdy container filled with Arm and Hammer and place it near their monitor to absorb chemical off-gassing. As monitors, especially the newer ones emit triphenyl phosphate, a chemical known to cause itching and nasal congestion to headaches [4]
- avoid using hand sanitizers. There is no research confirming that they are better than soap and water when used for ordinary use and they release chemicals into the air that aggravate asthma.
- avoid using Wite Out or any other liquid correction product (releases naphtha into the air), use the tape correction product. Light naphtha is made from petroleum and can cause exacerbation of some conditions. [5]

REFERENCES

- [1] <http://www.ehponline.org/docs/2003/111-13/ss.html>
- [2] <http://www.thewest.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=2&ContentID=124207>
- [3] <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/ozonegen.html#are%20ozone%20generators%20effective%20in%20controlling%20pollution>
- [4] <http://svtc.igc.org/listserv/letter71.htm>
- [5] <http://www.biclink.com/msds/WiteoutforEverythingCorrectionFluid2.pdf>

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