

## Home Ventilation

Keeping your home well ventilated is one of the most important factors in prohibiting mold growth, as it will help keep mold spores and other indoor air pollutants (radon, asbestos, carbon monoxide, dust, pollen, etc.) from accumulating and creating mold growth or allergy problems in susceptible people. These days houses are being constructed far more compact and air tight than in the past, so little outdoor air seeps in through cracks, closed windows and doors even when wind is strong and temperature is changing. Ventilation will also help lower moisture in your indoor air, which is essential since moisture is the cause of mold growth, rot, insect infiltration, bacterial growth, algae growth, etc.

In older houses outdoor air can get in relatively easy by infiltration, or even naturally through open windows when weather permits, which keeps the home drier and keeps pollutants moving, not settling indoors. In new homes the need for mechanical ventilation is quite high. Exhaust fans removing air and moisture from bathrooms, kitchens, laundry rooms, etc. are not only necessary, they're mandatory to prevent mold accumulation. However, the best way to prevent the buildup of indoor pollutants is to have mechanical ventilation removing indoor air and bringing in fresh, outdoor air. Without mechanical air ventilation from outdoors, the best way to prevent mold spore and other pollutants from becoming a health risk would be with dehumidification and HEPA air filtration.

According to the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineering (ASHRAE) a home should be moving 15 cubic feet of air per minute, per person in the household. To keep it simple add the number of bedrooms in the home to the number 1 and then multiply that by the 15 cfm: i.e. [(4 bedrooms + 1) x 15 cfm = 75 cfm]. Bathrooms are supposed to have a capacity of 50 cfm, and kitchens should have and exhaust capacity of 100 cfm.

For more information on home ventilation or indoor air issues, visit: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov), or [www.ashrae.org](http://www.ashrae.org).