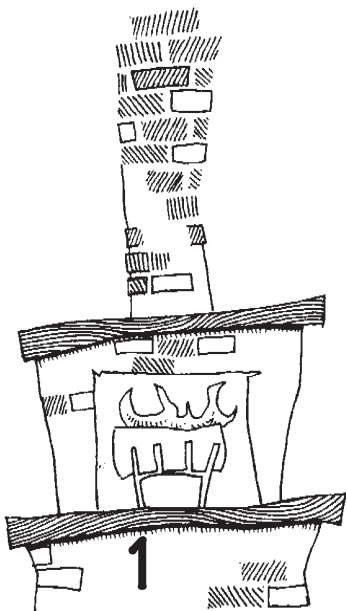


Indoor Air Pollution

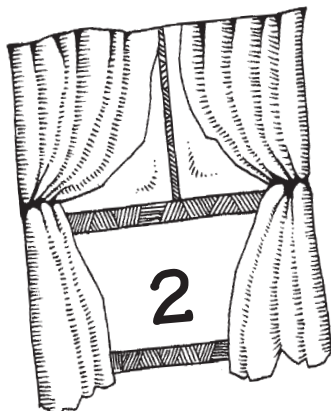
Did you know that *sometimes* the air in our homes, schools and offices can be worse for our health than the air outside?

Here are Three reasons

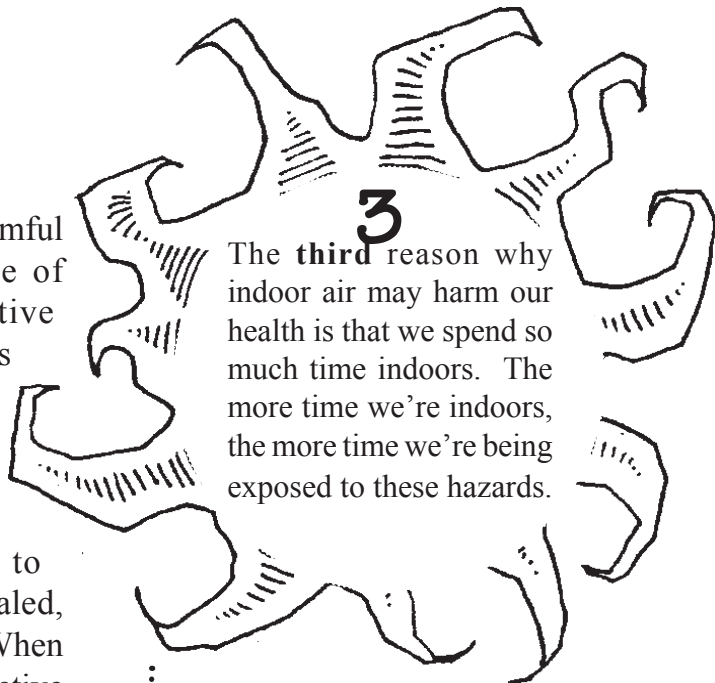


First of all, there may be harmful gases in our homes. One of these is radon, a radioactive gas. Radon is sometimes given off by the rocks and soil beneath our homes. Radon enters the building through the cracks in the foundation. It sticks to particulates and, when inhaled, lodges deep in our lungs. When the radon undergoes radioactive decay, it causes damage in the lung tissue. This can increase our risk of developing lung cancer.

Other harmful gases in buildings come from the materials in the buildings are made of as well as the furnishings and products we put in the buildings. There's glue in building supplies such as plywood and particleboard. There are chemicals in foam stuffing in furniture and in carpets.



Second, many buildings today are built to save energy. They don't let fresh air circulate. Fresh air from the outside can't get in and the stale, polluted air inside can't get out. This is because the windows are sealed, the walls and roofs have a lot of insulation, and the buildings are tightly built.



The **third** reason why indoor air may harm our health is that we spend so much time indoors. The more time we're indoors, the more time we're being exposed to these hazards.

SMART TIPS

Don't forget the danger from cigarettes, pipes, cigars, gas ranges, and kerosene space heaters.

Many solvents and chemicals in household cleaners and air fresheners give off gases.





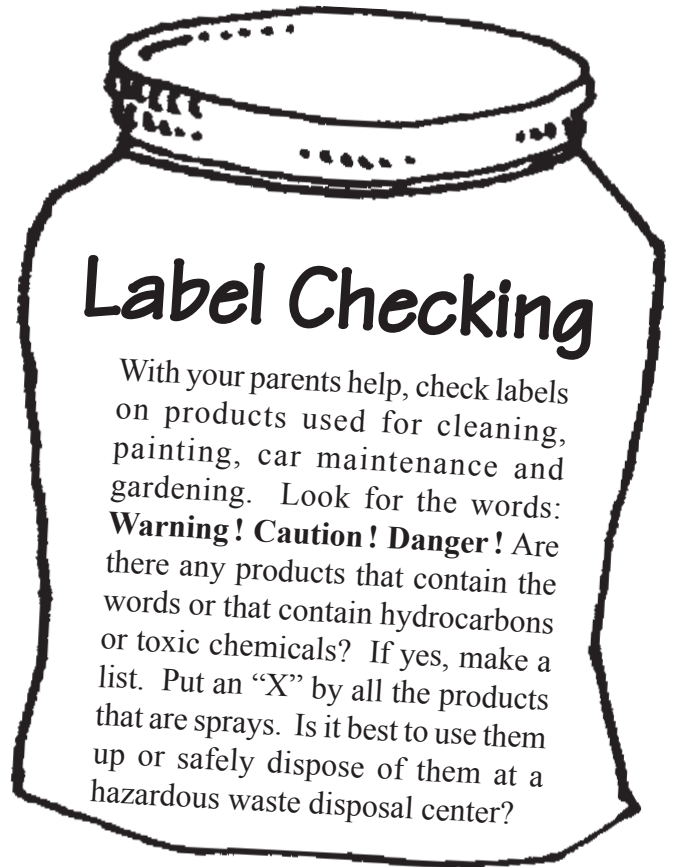
Home Inspections

Observe and do some "home inspections" to identify sources of air pollution at home and at school.

Materials:

- Newspapers
- Magazines (as research sources)
- Home Survey Form (below)

- Make a list of things or draw the things you think might cause pollution indoors.
- Talk about what you identified. Come up with ways to reduce or eliminate the pollution problem.
- Talk about why indoor air pollution is often more dangerous than outdoor air pollution.



Label Checking

With your parents help, check labels on products used for cleaning, painting, car maintenance and gardening. Look for the words: **Warning! Caution! Danger!** Are there any products that contain the words or that contain hydrocarbons or toxic chemicals? If yes, make a list. Put an "X" by all the products that are sprays. Is it best to use them up or safely dispose of them at a hazardous waste disposal center?

Home Survey Form

Which of these items can you find at home?

Potential Polluters

- Paints
- Solvents
- Cleaning products
- Household cleaning sprays
- Perfumed items (e.g. air freshners, fabric softener sheets)
- Automobile products
- Insecticides (bug killers and garden sprays)
- Furnishings (carpeting, furniture) that contain formaldehyde
- Insulation materials containing asbestos or formaldehyde
- Wood stove or fireplace

Air Quality Helpers

- House plants
- Fan in bathroom
- Fan over stove
- EPA-certified stove
- Maintained furnace
- Dry wood
- Clothesline
- Windows that open
- Fly swatters



You can use this survey in the spring and again in the fall to get an idea of how clean the air is in your home environment and if you have been able to make any changes.