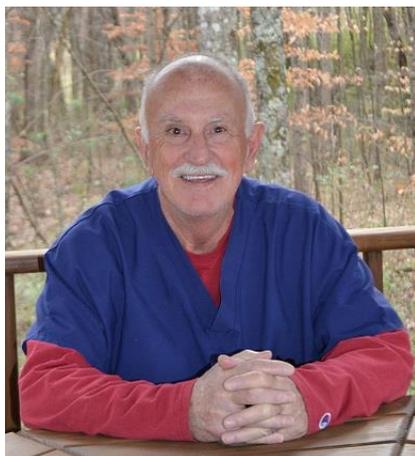


Union General Hospital's Health Talk



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What You Buy Can Affect Your Breathing

We're glad when spring rolls around but not too happy about the pollen and allergy triggers that it brings with it. A stuffy red nose with a scratchy throat becomes the irritation season. When things in your home also trigger your asthma and allergies, you feel you're in an endless battle to feel better. According to Dr. Cary Sennett, President and CEO of the Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), "Many household goods are hidden sources of asthma and allergy triggers." Dr. Sennett and the experts at AAFA recommend shopping smarter to avoid these triggers in your home.

1. **Look for approved products.** Be selective in your purchases. The first step is to see if the product has AAFA's asthma and allergy certification mark. This scientifically based program was created 10 years ago to test products ranging from cleaning products to toys to see if they are suitable for families with asthma or allergies.
2. **Avoid problem ingredients.** Removing allergens in the home requires regular cleaning. Some of the cleaning products have strong odors and can act as a trigger.
3. **Research air purifiers and humidifiers.** Good indoor air quality is important. Look for the AAFA certification on the product. Understand the degree of difficulty the item may require to keep it clean and running optimally. When purchasing air purifiers look for independent testing that proves the device removes allergen accumulation. When purchasing humidifiers, you want to look for one that maintains proper moisture levels as well as sanitizes the air.
4. **Breathable bedding.** One third of your life is spent in bed; therefore it's important to purchase products that won't trigger allergies. Look for bedding with outer fabrics that can be cleaned to remove allergen accumulation.

5. **High quality vacuum.** If you don't have a high quality vacuum you might be redistributing the allergens all over your house. A certified vacuum will have a high quality air-filtration system that captures the allergens.
6. **Avoid toys that cause sniffles and tear-filled eyes.** A favorite teddy bear should provide comfort, not sniffles or watery eyes. Most stuffed toys are filled with the same filling as bedding and can be a host for dust mites and other allergens as well as dyes that could irritate a child's sensitivities. Look for toys that are certified. This means that the toy is easily cleaned and the colors will not run.

For continued information on how to improve your quality of life, join Union General Hospital's FREE "Better Breathers Club". They meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 1:00pm in the 2nd floor classroom. For additional information, call Charlie DeFrancesco at (706) 439-6436.