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How to Improve Your Indoor Air Quality *from AARP.org*

Here's some simple strategies to protect from COVID-19, mold, radon and other indoor pollutants. Working from home, schooling from home and colder weather mean people are spending more hours a day indoors than before the coronavirus pandemic began.

All that time inside makes keeping your indoor air pollutant-free more important than ever. If you're working on-site or in an office, you can decrease the risk of contracting the coronavirus there, too.

Indoor air quality can be tainted by common home pollutants like asbestos, radon, mold, household chemicals and cigarette smoke; in some parts of the country, the smoke from wildfires can add to the problem. In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that indoor air might be **two to five times more polluted than outdoor air**.

Easy strategies like proper ventilation and low-cost fixes like air purifiers and filters can all help. While green plants may look nice, experts say they don't have much impact on the air quality in your home. Here are some ways to clean up your home's air environment.

Improve ventilation Most people don't think about indoor air quality unless they experience health symptoms that can include headaches, aggravated allergies, elevated asthma, fatigue, coughing, dry eyes and skin rashes.

An indoor air quality monitor will tell you how many particles you have in your house - though be skeptical of those that claim to detect everything - but you can also just use your nose. If there's a smoke event or you live near a busy road, you can generally smell or see that the air quality isn't good.

Inexpensive fixes can make a big difference. Start by opening a window (unless your area is experiencing smoke from wildfires) - a strategy recommended by the EPA to improve ventilation and lower the risk of contracting COVID-19.

It's ideal to have the best-ventilated space and as much fresh air as you can

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And best wishes for a happy and healthy 2021

From all of us here in Natural Resources

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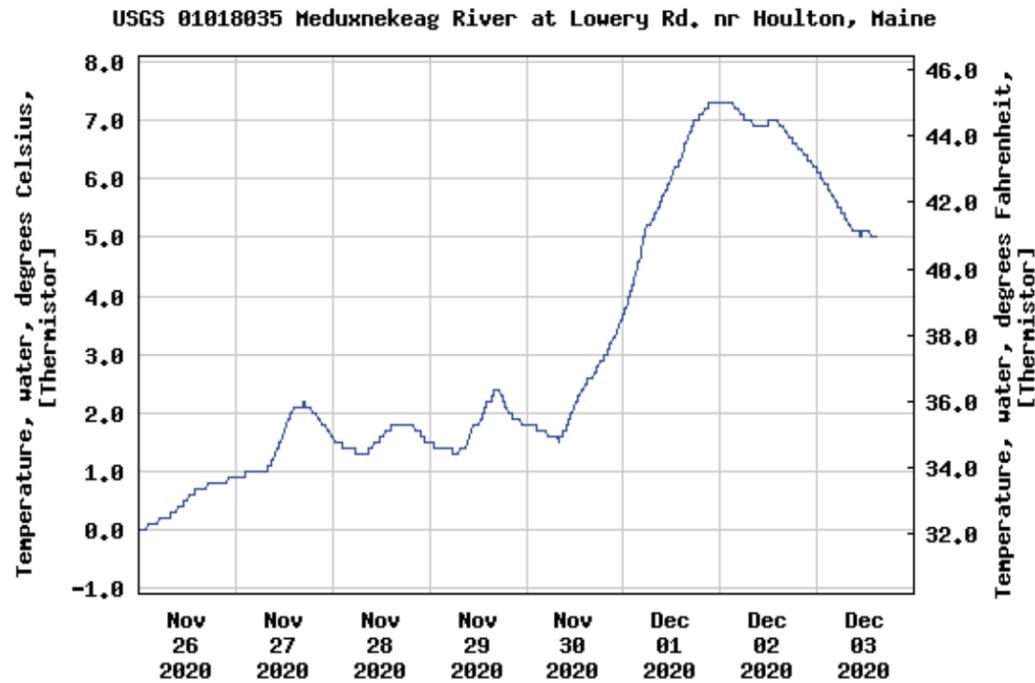
TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Isaac St. John



USGS Gage Station and Water Alert by Rhonda Smart, Water Resources Specialist

On December 1-2nd, 2020, we received 2.89" of rain in a short period of time. There are a couple ways to monitor the Meduxnekeag River at Lowery Bridge. The USGS gage station, partnered with HBMI shows the importance of how quickly the river levels can rise during a rain storm. The water data can be found on their website:

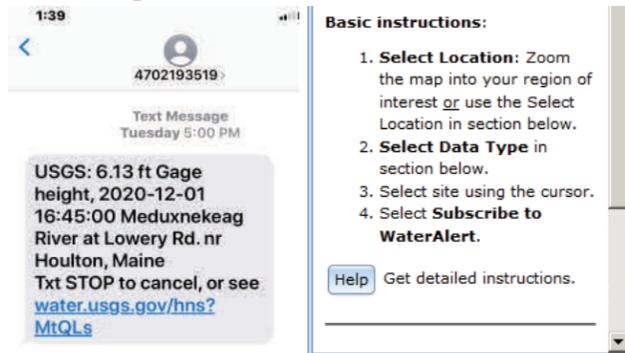
https://waterdata.usgs.gov/me/nwis/uv?site_no=01018035



---- Provisional Data Subject to Revision ----

The USGS has a new water alert system you can subscribe to and have alerts sent to your phone via text or email. When you subscribe to Water Alert you can have daily or hourly information with current conditions to keep informed of rising water levels or potential flooding (see examples at right)

To subscribe: <https://water.usgs.gov/wateralert>



What Not to Burn

Some materials when burned can release toxic or harmful chemicals when burned and may damage your wood burning appliance. Never burn:

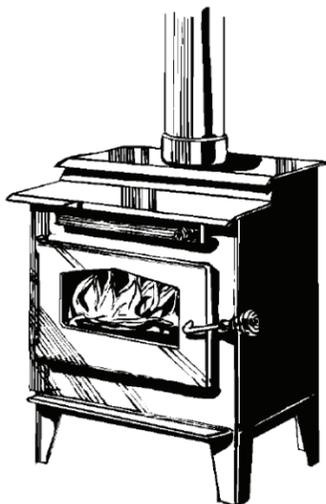
- Household trash, including cardboard, plastics, foam and the colored ink on magazines, boxes, and wrappers
- Coated, painted, and pressure-treated wood
- Ocean driftwood, plywood, particle board, or any wood with glue on or in it
- Wet, rotted, diseased, or moldy wood
- Plastic, asbestos, rubber, manure and animal remains

For more info:

www.epa.gov/burnwise

Burn Wise

Just as it does every year, the winter chill is upon us. This year has been especially challenging and many folks are finding themselves struggling to make ends meet and stay warm at the same time. If you are looking to burn wood there are some things to remember to stay safe and heat officially. EPA offers many tips to help you **Burn Wise**.



Check out the video tips at <https://www.epa.gov/burnwise/burn-wise-best-practice-videos>.

7 Habits That Improve Indoor Air Quality

1. Clean cooking vents regularly so they work effectively.
2. Turn ceiling fans on.
3. Use HEPA filters in your HVAC system and change them every 6 to 12 months.
4. Wipe down bathroom surfaces after showering.
5. Remove shoes and boots at the door to reduce the amount of chemicals and particles brought into the house.
6. Wipe moisture from windows and sills.
7. Vacuum regularly using HEPA equipped vacuum cleaner



Indoor Air Quality

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"It's invisible, odorless and present in many homes at the lower level," she says. "You may have more people in your home right now - college kids back from school or an elderly relative - or you're using your basement as a work-from-home space."

Radon detectors are inexpensive and can be purchased online or at your local hardware store. Professional radon services, which are often more accurate, can also evaluate whether there's radon in your home.

For more information about indoor air quality:

<https://www.aarp.org/home-family/your-home/info-2020/improve-home-air-quality.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/indoor-air-and-coronavirus-covid-19>



Holiday Word Search



Find these English & Maliseet words in the puzzle

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| Cookies | Sukolopanis |
| Family | Wicikitihticil |
| Fireplace | Sqotewapskot |
| Hibernate | Punoqsu |
| Ice Fishing | Nomehsuhke |
| Icicle | Pqomis |
| New Year | Pilikoton |
| Skating | Onolahqakom |
| Sledding | Miyawtehuwal |
| Snowball | Asakon |
| Snowman | 't-oliyal |
| Solstice | Apacuhse |
| Star | Posesom |
| Tree | Opos |

Q A P A C U H S E O I W W E H
M R A S A K O N T P C C I Y I
P I L I K O T O N O E O C U B
I T Y O P Q O M I S F O I P E
S A R A S D F E G K I K K O R
U Q P E W H J H K A S I I N N
K F O L E T Z S X T H E T O A
O I S T C V E U B I I S I L T
L R S S W N M H Q N N N H A E
O E E T W A E K K G G O T H N
P P S O R T P E Y U R W I Q E
A L O L U I U S P O W M C A W
N A M I P A N S K D F A I K Y
I C I C L E O G H O J N L O E
S E K E L Z Q X C S T A R M A
F A M I L Y S T O L I Y A L R
V B N M Q W U S N O W B A L L
S L E D D I N G E T U O P I Y
Q R I A S O L S T I C E F J Z

6 Steps for Safe & Effective Disinfectant Use



Step 1: Check that your product is EPA-approved

Find the EPA registration number on the product. Then, check to see if it is on EPA's list of approved disinfectants at: [epa.gov/listn](https://www.epa.gov/listn)



Step 2: Read the directions

Follow the product's directions. Check "use sites" and "surface types" to see where you can use the product. Read the "precautionary statements."

Step 3: Pre-clean the surface

Make sure to wash the surface with soap and water if the directions mention pre-cleaning or if the surface is visibly dirty.



Step 4: Follow the contact time

You can find the contact time in the directions. The surface should remain wet the whole time to ensure the product is effective.

Step 5: Wear gloves and wash your hands

For disposable gloves, discard them after each cleaning. For reusable gloves, dedicate a pair to disinfecting COVID-19. Wash your hands after removing the gloves.



Step 6: Lock it up

Keep lids tightly closed and store out of reach of children.

[coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov)

How to Improve Indoor Air Quality *continued*



get. Make use of properly installed bathroom or kitchen fans, too. Without proper venting from the kitchen to the outside, your home can be filled with grease, food odors and smoke. If you're not using bathroom ventilation, you can have mold and mildew buildup. Use fans if they're working well and replace them if they're not.

Focus on air filters and purifiers Use efficient air filters for your home's HVAC system and change them every six to 12 months to improve indoor air quality. Look for high-efficiency particle air (HEPA) filters but avoid ones that use UV light, which can generate ozone, a serious air pollutant. Ditto for filters with ionizers or hydroxyl radical generators. They don't do anything that the plain HEPA filter doesn't, plus they have the potential to introduce toxic molecules into your indoor environment.

Portable air purifiers that can filter out pollutants in a room, along with best practices recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, can be part of an overall plan to guard against germs, bacteria and the COVID-19 virus, according to the EPA.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, which celebrated national Indoor Air Quality Month in October by launching a new interactive healthier home resource with tips for reducing allergy and asthma triggers. You can also just buy a box fan and duct-tape a filter onto it, which can work really well.

If you live in an area where the outdoor air is quite contaminated - say, by wildfire smoke - upgrade the filter in your HVAC system. Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values (MERV) measure a filter's ability to absorb larger particles, and you'll want to get a filter with as high a MERV value as your HVAC system will handle, which will result in cleaner air.

Prevent mold and mildew Lowering the relative humidity in your house is essential to preventing the growth of mold, bacteria and viruses, says Doug Hoffman, executive director of the National Organization of Remediators and Mold Inspectors (NORMI).

"Typically, mold, bacteria and viruses thrive in environments where the relative humidity is higher than 60 percent or lower than 40 percent, so stay within that range," says Hoffman, who also suggests using ventilation fans, vacuuming regularly and making sure you have fresh air coming into the house.

For an in-depth look at the humidity environment in your home, a professional may do swab or aerosol testing, particulate counts, and relative humidity and temperature measurements to create an indoor air quality (IAQ) profile. This can be used to personalize a home solution if problems are found.

To fix mold issues, experts usually sanitize to lower the microbial count. That may involve fogging the space and wiping it down, or using air purification technology. In severe cases, remediation - removing affected materials - might be required.



Get relief from radon As we move into the winter season, radon poses another risk to indoor air quality. This naturally occurring radioactive gas is found in most soil types, and can move up through the ground into your home through the foundation. When present in large amounts, it's the second-leading cause of lung cancer.

Continued page 7



GREENHOUR

Powered by **L.L.Bean**

L.L. Bean and the National Wildlife Federation are teaming up to help parents get their kids outside during the pandemic.

The program, call the Green Hour, features seasonal activities aimed at getting kids to spend more time outside. These activities include going on a leaf patrol, playing bird bingo, identifying animal tracks, becoming a wildlife detective and more.

This program comes during the pandemic when kids are spending more time indoors and in front of a screen. Green Hour content will be distributed by both L.L. Bean and the National Wildlife Federation through newsletters, social media, the Green Hour website and the L.L. Bean Outside web page.

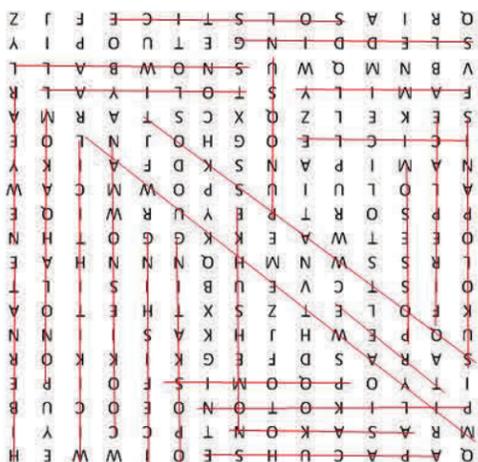
For more information check out:

<https://www.nwf.org/Kids-and-Family/Connecting-Kids-and-Nature>

<https://www.llbean.com/llb/shop/517992?page=llbean-outside>



Puzzle Answers



Winter Science Fun

Winter is often a time when we tend to stay inside missing out on a lot of fun stuff to do outdoors. When most folks think of winter outdoor activities they think of skating, sledding, skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, snowmen and snowball fights.

This year, while Covid-19 is still running rampant in many communities, let's look to some fun outdoor science activities that anyone can do. Did you know how cool **Frozen Bubbles** are?

All you need is:

- Liquid Glycerin (found in most drug stores and retailers)
- Dish Soap
- A bubble wand (or any ring to make bubbles)
- Freezing weather



Then:

- Stir a drop of glycerin in a small dish of dish soap.
- Dip bubble wand into the soap and blow a couple test bubbles before heading outside.
- Dress Warmly and go outside into freezing weather
- Blow bubbles!
- Let some bubbles fall to ground, break some bubbles in mid air and watch what happens!

What happens: If the temperature is low enough, the skin of the bubble freezes, the rainbow swirls disappear and the bubble becomes cloudy. The bubble still floats in the air. It won't fall to the ground any faster than it would on a warm summer day.

At 10 degrees below 0 Fahrenheit and colder, that's when the fun starts. The frozen bubbles don't break into droplets of water as summer bubbles do. Instead, they turn into sparkling rainbow confetti that flutters to the ground.

Winter Science Fun *continued*

Ever wonder just **How much water is in the snow?**

For this all you'll need is:

- A large clear jar
- Dry erase marker
- Ruler
- Clock or watch
- Snow!



Fill your jar with snow (make sure it is on a surface that is ok to get wet) and see how long it takes to melt. Use your ruler to measure how much water is left when the snow is gone.

For added twists:

- try this experiment with light fluffy snow and heavy wet snow. Do you get different answers?
- Fill the jar with ice cubes now much water do you get when melted? How about with crushed ice?

Ever wonder **how do Arctic animals stay warm?**

For this you will need:

- Plastic or latex gloves
- Vegetable shortening
- Large bowl of icy water
- Plastic wrap



Then -

- place bare hand in icy water to see how cold it is (no longer than 30 seconds).
- Dry hand and make a fist
- Put fist inside glove - do not put fingers into the fingers of the glove
- Cover your fist with a **thick** layer of vegetable shortening
- Wrap you entire hand/fist in plastic wrap
- Place hand back in icy water and see what happens

Animals like walruses, seals, and polar bears all have a thick layer of fat, called blubber, that keeps them warm in the icy waters. The shortening in this experiment acts like the blubber to keep you warm. Polar bears also have black skin underneath two layers of fur that help trap the heat when they are on land.

<https://www.highlights.com/parents/family-activities/14-winter-science-experiments>

Making Snow Ice Cream

This quick and easy treat can be made by gathering:

- * Large bowl of fresh (clean) snow
- * 1 tsp vanilla extract
- * 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- * Mix all together in the large bowl and enjoy



Add ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder to make a yummy chocolate version

Make about 8 servings. Put leftovers in freezer

https://www.123homeschool4me.com/easy-snow-ice-cream-recipe_14/

Colored Balls or Boxes of Ice

Make these easy, fun yard decorations with just a few simple items.

- Empty balloons/milk cartons
- Food coloring
- Water
- Plastic gloves
- Bowl for each balloon
- Ribbon or bows
- Freezing weather outdoors (or a chest freezer inside if you're impatient)



Place a few drops of food coloring in each balloon or carton. Carefully fill each balloon or carton with cold water. Put different amounts of water in each to make different sizes. Be extremely careful not to spill as food coloring can stain surfaces and your clothes.

Carefully tie end of balloon. Put filled balloon in bowl, with tied end up. Place balloons and cartons outdoors to freeze or into the freezer. Do not put multiple balloons in one container to freeze (if the balloons touch, they won't freeze completely).



After balloons or cartons are **completely** frozen, (24 to 72 hours depending on temperature) carefully peel balloon off of the ice ball or the carton from the ice block. Add ribbons or bows to ice shapes if desired and place outside in the snow. They will add color and sparkle to your yard for weeks to come. The colder it is, the longer they will last.