Detox Your Life – Clearing the Air: Simple Ways to Improve Indoor Air Quality (Part 5) Transcript

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Introduction to Doctor Talks and Detox Your Life

Open your windows. Just 15 to 20 minutes a day when the weather permits can significantly improve indoor air quality. Of course, if there's a wildfire, pesticide spraying nearby or heavy industrial pollution, it's better to keep windows closed.

If your home has central air or heat, think of the Hvac system as the lungs of your home. It's important to keep it clean. Welcome to Doctor Talks, the podcast where every episode leads to a healthier you.

Join us as we navigate the world of optimal health, uncovering groundbreaking strategies to conquer chronic disease. In each episode, we'll bring you the latest insights from leading health experts, medical innovators, and wellness warriors.

If you're seeking to transform your health journey, or if you're looking for answers to burning questions, you've come to the right place. Get ready to unlock the secrets of lifelong health and vitality.

This is Doctor Talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.

Why Indoor Air Quality Matters

Welcome to the final week of Detox Your Life. I hope these past few sessions have given you valuable insights and empowered you to make meaningful changes in your daily routines.

Last week, we dove into household cleaners. How many of you ended up crouched under your kitchen sink reading labels? You're not alone. Today we're shifting focus to the air we breathe.

Specifically, the quality of the air inside our homes. We'll be talking all about indoor air quality. As I mentioned last week, there's overlap with household cleaners.

But this session is focused solely on what we inhale because we're narrowing in on one topic. Today's session will be a little shorter. Why does this matter?

While most of us spend around 90% of our time indoors. Only 7% is spent outside. A national survey even found that back in the 90s, Americans were indoors nearly 87% of the time.

And I'd bet that number is even higher today. According to the EPA, indoor air can actually be 2 to 5 times more polluted than outdoor air, and sometimes even 100 times worse.

That's a big deal. We've already touched on how things like home fragrances, cleaning products, and house dust contribute to poor air quality. But the structure of your home plays a role, too.

From the building materials and flooring to paint and ventilation, and these are much harder to control. Interestingly, older homes, especially those built before the 1960s, were often drafty or which used to be seen as a downside for energy efficiency.

But from an air quality perspective, it's actually beneficial because it allows for more fresh air circulation. After the oil crisis in the 70s, homes were built to be more energy efficient and air tight.

But that also reduced how often air indoor air gets replaced with fresh air.

How Homes Affect Air Quality

That drop in air exchange rates has had a real impact on the air we breathe at home. On top of less ventilation, modern building materials are filled with chemicals.

Things like VOCs and flame retardants in spray foam insulation, formaldehyde in flooring, adhesives, phthalates in older vinyl, and in carpets. They don't just stay locked up.

They slowly release into the air over time. In some cases, the buildup of these chemicals can lead to what's known as sick building syndrome, where people feel unwell in a specific building but their symptoms improve once they leave.

It can be triggered by things like mold, chemical, off gassing or even allergens. While we can make a big difference with lifestyle changes, we can't control everything.

Renters may not be able to change flooring or walls, and we certainly can't do much about our neighbors air fresheners or cigaret smoke. But instead of stressing over what we can't change, let's focus on what we can.

The easiest first step. Open your windows just 15 to 20 minutes a day when the weather permits can significantly improve indoor air quality. Of course, if there's a wildfire pesticide spraying nearby or heavy industrial pollution is better to keep windows closed.

If your home has central air or heat, think of the Hvac system as the lungs of your home. It's important to keep it clean. Have your ducks professionally cleaned every few years and be sure to replace air filters regularly.

Look for filters with a MRV rating appropriate for your system. The higher the number, the smaller the particles it can capture. But don't exceed what your system can handle.

Another simple step. Eliminate artificial fragrances.

Simple Ways to Improve Indoor Air

These contribute to indoor air pollution and removing them can actually save you money. Once you adjust, you won't miss them. Swapping out your cleaning products for safer alternatives is another easy win.

And finally, using a good air purifier can make a huge difference when shopping for a purifier. Look for one with true Hepa filtration. These trap 99.97% of particles down to 0.3 microns.

Be wary of labels that say Hepa type, which may not meet the same standard. Hepa filters handle particles. But if you want to remove chemical gases, too, like VOCs, you'll need activated carbon.

The more carbon in the unit, the better it can trap chemicals and the longer it will last before needing to be replaced. Ideally, you'll want a purifier that combines both Hepa and a good amount of carbon at least 10 pounds.

Brands like Austin Air, IQ air, and Air Purifier are excellent, though they can be pricey. Air doctor is a more affordable option that's great for particles, but less effective on VOCs due to lower carbon content.

If an air purifier isn't in your budget right now, a do it yourself filter made from a box fan and Hvac filters can still work well, especially during emergencies like wildfires.

You can build a plastic version with one or more filters for better particle capture. As we wrap up, I want to revisit the big picture. Reducing toxic exposure isn't about being perfect.

You won't be able to eliminate every harmful chemical, and that's okay. In week one, we covered food, how pesticides and contaminants sneak into even fresh foods.

You learned how to choose better produce, meats and seafood, with organic being the priority when whenever possible. In week two, we explored kitchen tools and storage, how to limit plastics and switch to safer materials like glass and stainless steel.

Air Purifiers and DIY Filtration

You also learned about hidden toxic toxins in packaging and how to care for the plastic items you do use. Week three focused on personal care. You learn that just because a product is on the shelf doesn't mean it's safe.

You now know what ingredients to avoid and how to choose better sunscreens, nail polish and hair products. Last week was all about household cleaners and laundry products and how they impact your air and dust.

You learned what ingredients to watch for and which brands are safer. And today we tackled indoor air. How do to improve it affordably and effectively?

How to shop for smart for air filters and even how to make your own. I hope this course has helped you to take more control over your environment. Remember, perfection is not the goal.

Consistency is reducing your exposure over time based on what's realistic for your life is what really makes a difference. What we do every day matters more than the occasional slip.

So be kind to yourself and just keep going one small step at a time. I'm going to redo the very last slide on this recording. Slide the last slide 25.

I hope this course has helped you take more control over your environment.

Course Recap and Closing Message

Remember, perfection isn't the goal. Consistency is reducing your exposure over time based on what's realistic for your life is what really makes a difference.

What we do every day matters more than the occasional slip. So be kind to yourself and just keep going one small step at a time. Thank you for tuning in to Doctor Talks.

We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health. Each day is a new opportunity to make choices that empower your wellbeing.

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Real talks from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.