

# Improve Your Indoor Air Quality

- Frequently dust with a damp or microfiber cloth
- Wash bedding to reduce dust mites
- Routinely wash throw rugs and soft furnishings
- Minimize use of fragranced products and aerosols
- Report water leaks

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Improve  
Indoor Air  
Quality in  
Your Room or  
Apartment

**UCONN**  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
AND SAFETY

## Dust, Dust Mites, and Air Purifiers

**Dust** is mostly skin cells, hair fragments, clothing and paper fibers, pollen, dirt, powder and spray personal products and cleaners, and other tiny particles from items in our environment. When inhaled, dust can be a respiratory irritant. In the typical small dorm room environment, these dusts collect quickly. Using fans in a dusty room can keep dust suspended in the air.

**Dust mites** are a common source of respiratory irritation and allergies. They are quite common in household dust and survive by eating skin cells and other materials in dust.

To reduce exposure to dust and dust mites:

- clean weekly with a damp or microfiber cloth
- wash throw rugs and other soft furnishings frequently covers
- wash bedding weekly in hot water
- use allergen blocking pillow

When used and maintained properly, **appropriately sized** air purifiers with HEPA filters can filter out dust in the environment.

To learn about acceptable air purifiers and usage scan the QR code here:



## Fragrance Products and Other VOC's

Some components of fragrance formulas found in cleaners, air fresheners, essential oil diffusers, laundry products, personal care products, perfumes, body sprays and other scented products may trigger allergic reactions or sensitivities in some individuals. This is especially true for people with existing respiratory conditions, infections, or allergies. Scented products, nail polish and removers, aerosol sprays and other products can also produce volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which can affect your health. Use of scented products in a small space may have a greater effect on sensitive individuals.

For people with sensitivities to fragrances, inhaling them may result in shortness of breath, the sensation of being suffocated (dyspnea), coughing, phlegm, a runny or stuffy nose, headache, chest tightness, and wheezing. Eye and respiratory tract irritation, headaches, and dizziness are some common symptoms of exposure to VOCs. Allergic reactions, including contact dermatitis, can range in severity, but may include hives, itchy skin, a rash, flaking or peeling skin, facial swelling, irritation of the eyes, nose and mouth, wheezing, and anaphylaxis. If you experience symptoms of what you suspect is an allergic reaction, consult your healthcare professional, as sensitivity to allergens can become more severe over time.

**While students cannot eliminate exposures when living in the close dormitory setting, refraining from using fragranced products in their room may help alleviate symptoms.**

To learn more about indoor air quality and VOCs scan the QR code here:



## Humidity and Mold

Indoor humidity levels tend to drop over the fall and winter. **Humidity below 30% can cause dry skin, irritate nasal passages and throat, and make your eyes itchy.**

We do not recommend the use of humidifiers in student rooms. Humidifiers require meticulous maintenance to prevent growth of bacteria and mold. Dirty humidifiers can cause flu-like symptoms and infections and can cause mold growth if humidity levels get too high. Contact your doctor or pharmacist for alternative ways to alleviate symptoms.

Excess moisture can cause naturally-occurring mold spores to grow on surfaces, in as little as 24 to 48 hours. Wet towels, condensation on refrigerators or windows, unreported water leaks, spills not adequately cleaned, and food and dirty dishes left out can all lead to mold growth. It's not uncommon to find mold growth in bathrooms due to the wet environment. Fortunately, it is easily cleaned with normal cleaning products.

***Preventing sources of moisture is the key to preventing mold growth.***



Scan to learn more about mold growth and control



Scan to learn what to do (and not do) if you find mold growth