

Better Ventilation and 'Covid-Proofing' Your Home



How do you prevent COVID-19 from circulating when you live in close quarters? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends isolating the covid patient for at least five days, preferably in a separate room with access to their own bathroom, as well as diligent mask-wearing for both the patient and the caregiver. For many families, however, those are not easy options. Not everyone has an extra bedroom, let alone an extra bathroom. Young children should not be left alone, and the youngest cannot tolerate masks.

Don't despair. Scientists say there is still a lot people can do to protect their families, and one way to do so is by improving ventilation and filtration of the air. "Ventilation matters a lot," says Dr. Amy Barczak, an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. "If you're taking care of someone at home, it's really important to maximize all the interventions that work." Viral particles float through the air like invisible secondhand smoke, and the particles diffuse as they travel. Outside of the home, viruses are quickly dispersed by the wind. Inside, germs can build up, like clouds of potent cigarette smoke, increasing the risk of inhaling the virus. Therefore the best strategy for avoiding the virus is to make your indoor environment as much like the outdoors as possible.

HOW TO BETTER VENTILATE YOUR HOME

- Open as many windows as the weather allows. If possible, open windows on opposite sides of the room to create a cross breeze.
- Place a box fan in the patient's window, facing outward, in order to draw the germy air outside.
- Wedge towels in any gaps under the bedroom door.
- Cover return air gills with plastic.
- Turn on a bathroom or kitchen exhaust fan to shuttle the germy air outside.
- Open windows in addition to running exhaust fans when showering.
- Utilize a portable air purifier.

Sincerely,

Del Norte Healthcare District Board of Directors
Kevin Caldwell, M.D.
Elizabeth Austen
Michael Young
Tonya Pearcey, R.N.
Juan Santillan

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