

A Clean, Healthy Home

By Carla Schick



ACHIEVING A SANITARY home environment can be a challenge when airborne allergens, dust mites, mold and bacteria easily accumulate on all possible surfaces. But, living in a relatively germ-free atmosphere is important for immunocompromised individuals since viruses and other microbes in the home can have a negative impact on their quality of life. Here are a few options to help minimize the presence of unwanted organisms in the home.

Clean Floors and Dust-Free Furniture

Experts agree that cleaning the floors on a weekly basis is a good way to decrease the occurrence of certain airborne allergens, dust mites and other pesky microbes. This is particularly true for carpeted flooring. According to an article titled 3 Home Health Benefits to Carpet Cleaning, "If members of your household suffer from conditions that can affect their breathing ... it's especially crucial that you vacuum your carpets at least three times a week." A canister-style vacuum cleaner can remove pet dander, lead and everyday dirt from the carpet. And, these vacuums generally come with a built-in HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter that captures lung-damaging air pollutants. Various attachments may also come with the vacuum, including a wand that disconnects from the canister to vacuum stairs and drapes more easily, and separate head attachments that can be used to vacuum tile, wood and medium- to low-pile carpeting.

An antimicrobial doormat can be the first line of defense

when it comes to keeping dirt and other irritants out of the home. Antimicrobial-treated yarn on the doormat removes and traps debris, dust mites and other allergens from the bottom of shoes, creating a biostatic barrier that disables microbes on contact. The mats are made with a flexible, industrial-strength rubber backing and can be placed outside and inside the home to provide added relief and protection.

Using a sanitizing vacuum with UVC light technology is another excellent way to reduce germs and deodorize furniture and mattress fabrics. Laboratory tests have shown that sanitizing vacuums have the ability to eliminate MRSA and the H1N1 flu virus, as well as combat certain molds and allergens without the use of chemicals.

Healthy Air and Sanitized Surfaces

Healthy air quality is of supreme importance to having a good quality of life, especially for those with lung and breathing problems. Air purifiers that offer a complete cleaning system, including the use of UVC light to kill bacteria, germs, airborne mold spores and unwanted odors, are a great way to maintain clean breathing air. Many systems also come with a powerful HEPA air filter that captures allergens to improve overall air quality.

And, don't forget to sanitize all hard surfaces, including high-touch points like door handles, light switches, TV controls, etc., with an oxide-based disinfectant. Some current market products are ready-to-use, non-irritating to the skin and can kill E. coli, salmonella, listeria and mold, as well as eliminate odor.

Germ-Free Zone

While it may not be possible to live in a completely germ-free, sterilized home, there are products available to help us in our battle against dust mites, bacteria and other unwanted microbes! ■

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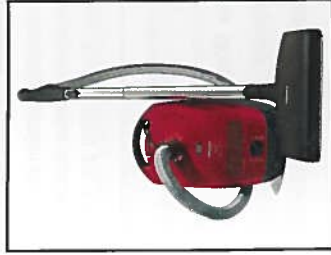
Reference

1. CBS Local Media. 3 Home Health Benefits to Carpet Cleaning. Accessed at newyork.cbslocal.com/2012/01/26/three-home-health-benefits-to-carpet-cleaning.

Directory of Germ-Fighting Products

Miele S 2181 Titan Compact Canister Vacuum

The Miele S 2181 Titan Compact Canister Vacuum cleaner features an electrobrush ideal for cleaning low- to medium-pile carpeting, rugs and smooth flooring. A telescopic, electric, stainless steel wand and long electrical cord with automatic rewind provide a 29-foot-by-5-inch total cleaning radius. The vacuum is agile, lightweight, features six distinct power settings and comes with an AirClean FilterBag and Active HEPA filter. **(866) 694-5851, bit.ly/1n1oc3o**



bathroom floors. The lightweight, handheld cleaning device kills viruses, bacteria, pest eggs and dust mites without the use of chemicals. It also comes with a detachable hand vacuum to sanitize hard-to-reach areas. The vacuum measures 5.5 inches wide by 13 inches deep, and weighs 5 pounds. **(800) 454-4408, www.verilux.com**

Guardian Technologies AC5000 3-in-1 Air Cleaning System

The Guardian AC5000 3-in-1 Air Cleaning System features multiple levels of cleaning, including a True HEPA filter and UVC light technology, to capture allergens, kill airborne viruses and bacteria, and destroy mold and odors. It is ideal to use in medium-size rooms and processes the air in approximately 155 square feet every hour. **(866) 603-5900, www.guardiantechnologies.com**



Vital Oxide

Vital Oxide is a line of EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)-registered disinfectant cleaners, mold killers and odor eliminators. The products are ready-to-use, do not require dilution and are NSF-certified (no rinse required). Vital



Oxide cleaners are non-corrosive, non-irritating to the skin and can kill E. coli, salmonella and listeria in less than 60 seconds.

(800) 303-5405, www.shop.vitaloxide.com

Dr. Doormat

Dr. Doormat's antimicrobial doormat is made with a biodegradable antimicrobial treatment that captures and disables dust, bacteria and other allergens, as well as odor-causing microorganisms on contact. The surface is made with high-quality, stain-resistant polypropylene fiber, and a durable, flexible, rubber backing. It is available in two sizes: 24 inches long by 18 inches wide, and 36 inches long by 24 inches wide. The mat is allergy friendly and available in chocolate brown, autumn red, charcoal gray and peacock blue. **(301) 770-2002, www.drdoormat.com**



Verilux CleanWave Sanitizing Portable Vacuum

The CleanWave Sanitizing Portable Vacuum uses germ-reducing UVC technology to sanitize surfaces, including mattresses, upholstery and

