Green Building

HOWARD ASCH

Good building methods prevent cancer?

There are some interesting studies that show the way we build can significantly raise the risk of cancer. It's not exactly the house that is the problem, but the indoor air pollution which too many houses are not designed to address. The good news is we know how to reduce these risks with some simple changes.

Let's look at results of some studies of indoor air and health risks:

- An EPA survey concluded that indoor air was 3 to 70 times more polluted than outdoor air.
- Another EPA study stated that the toxic chemicals in the air from household cleaners are 3 times more likely to cause cancer than outdoor air.
- The National Cancer Association results of a 15-year study concluded that women who work in the home are at a 54% higher risk of developing cancer than women who work outside the home.
- The National Academy of Sciences has estimated that 15% of the population suffers from chemical sensitivities.
- The American Lung Association directly links Indoor Air Quality to the increase in asthma. Asthma has increased by 600% since 1980.

Part of the problem is the ever increasing amounts of man-made chemicals in our home environment, many of which have never been fully tested for toxicity. Common household cleaners such as bleach have been linked to increases in breast cancer.

The other part of the problem is that our houses often lack adequate air changes to remove those chemicals. That's something we can fix with good design. Providing adequate ventilation and providing it correctly can reduce the risks significantly. Planning at the design phase to bring in the right amount fresh air and distribute it through all parts of the house can drastically reduce effects of household air pollution and give our customers a heathier house.

Shouldn't we be offering our customers the option of a healthier home along with granite countertops and premium plumbing fixtures?

Contact your HVAC contractor to find out how you can build a healthier home.