Cleaning the Air

Some popular smell-goods can damage your lungs.

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Candles, incense, air sprays—we love for our homes to smell wonderful—but some popular scented products may be toxic. Researchers discovered that the chemical 1,4 dichlorobenzene, found in many air fresheners, toilet bowl cleaners and mothballs, can permanently injure lungs. African Americans, who are 38% more likely to have asthma than white people, and others with respiratory illnesses are especially vulnerable. Consider natural alternatives containing essential oils and herbs, often sold in health food stores, recommends household-toxin expert Annie B. Bond. Another option? Beeswax candles, which “produce negative ions that help remove pollution from the air,” she says. Also, crack a window, and install an air-to-air exchanger to introduce fresh outdoor air.

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