

## Build a Barrier Against Allergies

Millions of Americans suffer from allergies. Keeping those allergies out of your home is an important task. Here are several ways to keep allergies from infiltrating your home:

- ◆ Choose house plants that have low pollen counts – miniature rose, begonia, peace lily, and Swedish ivy.
- ◆ Don't allow smoking in your home.
- ◆ Limit the use of strong odors or spray perfumes, air fresheners, and talcum powder.
- ◆ If you have throw rugs, use ones that are washable and wash them often.
- ◆ Encase mattresses, box springs, and pillows in airtight plastic or special allergen-proof fabric covers.
- ◆ Wash bedding weekly in hot water and dry in a hot drier.
- ◆ Vacuum your home weekly. Use a vacuum that has a HEPA (high-



- efficiency particulate) filter on it to prevent the dust from entering the air.
- ◆ Keep pets out of the bedroom or other rooms where family members who have allergies spend time.
- ◆ Keep your home clean and dry to avoid cockroaches, which can trigger allergies and asthma in some people.
- ◆ Consider using in-home air filters that recirculate and clean the air. Select HEPA filters for your air conditioner. Replace filters regularly.

For more tips, visit the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America at [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org).

## Watch Out on the Waves

Many people go boating for summer fun, but before you head out, consider some of these safety tips:

- Operate at a safe speed and be ready to react quickly in emergencies. Follow all navigational markers.
- Be on guard for boater's fatigue caused by the sun, wind, vibration, and motion.
- Watch for submerged rocks, logs, and other obstacles.
- Know the boating "rules of the road." Take a boating education course. Most accidents are caused by operator error, inattention, carelessness, and inexperience.
- Watch for and avoid overhead power lines when operating a sailboat.
- Bring a first aid kit, sunscreen, sunglasses, and a tool kit in the boat.
- Have fire extinguishers on board. Be aware of the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. Ensure sufficient ventilation, and install CO detectors.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages. Their use affects judgment, vision balance, and coordination. U.S. Coast Guard data show that in fatalities involving alcohol use, over half of all victims capsized their boat or fell overboard.
- Make sure everyone on board is wearing a Coast Guard approved life jacket that fits properly.



For more boating safety tips, visit the U.S. Coast Guard at [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org).

## Be Cautious with Electricity

- ◆ Use appliances and equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ◆ Replace damaged equipment or have it repaired at an authorized repair center.
- ◆ Make sure power strips, cords, and surge protectors are designed to handle the loads for their intended use. Avoid overloading circuits by plugging too many items into the same outlet.
- ◆ Avoid contact with power lines. If you see fallen wires, call 911.
- ◆ Unplug outdoor tools and appliances when not in use.
- ◆ Avoid damp conditions – including wet grass – when using electricity. Put covers on outdoor receptacles near swimming pools.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation, [www.electrical-safety.org](http://www.electrical-safety.org)

## How to Save Money This Summer

- *Seal it up.* Insulate the attic, stop air leaks, and install energy efficient windows.
- *Plant trees.* Plant them so they shade the house. Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25 percent of a household's energy consumption.
- *Circulate air with a ceiling fan.* Fans are especially effective in large rooms, common areas, and upstairs bedrooms.
- *Use a digital thermostat.* Set it so the house isn't as cool during times of the day when no one is at home. It will work automatically and save time and money.
- *Cook with care.* Cook outside on the grill to keep the heat outdoors. Don't use your oven on hot days. Try cooking with the microwave more often.
- *Fix hot-water drips.* A single dripping hot water faucet can waste 212 gallons of water per month. Fixing the drip saves the cost of heating water.
- *Light for less.* Use compact florescent light bulbs in fixtures you use the most.