

How to Clean Your Air Conditioning Ducts and Vents

Sometimes we take the simple act of breathing for granted. We don't have to worry about it or think about it, it happens automatically. What happens, though, when what you once thought was a natural function of air into and out of your lungs becomes difficult? Asthma, the common cold virus, dust, mites, pollen, pet dander and the like can all make it extremely hard to breathe, and rarely are we aware of how frequently we come into contact with some or all of those pollutants like those mentioned. Even the tidiest homemaker is likely to have at least microscopic organisms like mold and germs in her house. Why? No matter how clean your house is kept, unless you clean your air ducts and vents, contaminants get into your home through your HVAC – your heating and cooling system.

If your heating and cooling ducts and vents are dirty or contain bacteria, mold, fungus or dander, or any kind of other pollutants, these vents and ducts will carry those impurities right into the air you and your family breathe in every day. We have all heard of the dangers of mold and mildew, and we all know what it is like to experience the temporary breathing difficulties associated with something as simple as the common cold. Think about how debilitating it could be to have a more permanent respiratory condition such as asthma, bronchitis, or a persistent allergy-induced cough. If you don't properly clean your air vents and air ducts, you are subjecting yourself and your children to an increased likelihood of suffering from one or more of these distresses.

To make sure everyone stays as healthy as possible, you should routinely have your AC ducts and air vents professionally cleaned. Some estimates put the percentage of illnesses caused by contaminants in the air as high as 50%; it is simply logical that cleaning your air ducts and vents may help everyone in your household feel better each and every day of their lives.

However, the health benefits to people are not the only advantage to keeping your HVAC ducts and vents spic and span. A clean heating and air system can also help keep our environment healthy. That's right, the cleaner your ducts and vents, the better your system is likely to run. The better your system runs, the less energy is used, and that is a great way to support our world. When your energy usage decreases, the thickness of your wallet increases because your utility company will get less of your hard-earned money. Also, clean machines run better than dirty ones and therefore last longer. Making sure your air ducts and vents are regularly maintained is likely to add years to the life of this major appliance.

Who Should Have these Air Ducts and Vents Cleaned? The simple answer is everyone, but there are also some lifestyle choices that increase your need for air duct and vent cleaning. If you or someone in your household is a smoker, you should definitely tie to it that your ducts and vents get inspected and have a thorough cleaning done regularly. Similarly, if your family enjoys the friendship of a canine or feline friend who sheds hair – don't they all? – You should definitely have your system cleaned. Hair and dander can accumulate in the air ducts and vents and adversely affect your system's performance and your family's health. In addition to smoke and pet hair, water can also wreak havoc on the air ducts and vents in your home. Where there is water that is allowed to sit and fester, mold and mildew cannot be far behind, so if your house has had some type of water damage, be sure to seek the advice of a professional duct and vent cleaning company.

How exactly do these professional cleaning companies clean your forced air ducts and air vents? The process of air duct cleaning can be similar to cleaning your carpet. A trained professional uses a device similar to a huge vacuum cleaner that can "inhale" the dirt and germs out of your air vents and ducts. Sometimes the duct or vent-cleaning contractor will have this vacuum machine hooked to the company's truck, so you don't even have to worry about using your electricity. In addition to cleaning ducts and vents, most professional cleaners will also clean the other components of your system.

Whenever you decide to hire anyone to perform work on something as costly as an air-conditioning system, you should use research and caution. Air duct cleaning specialists and vent cleaning specialists have a trade-related organization to which they may belong and that sets the standards for the work. The National Air Duct Cleaners Association, or NADCA, sets forth guidelines for both HVAC systems and personnel, it is wise to check out a cleaning professional through the NADCA to get the peace of mind that comes from knowing you are following the proper rules about protecting your cooling and heating unit and your family's health. Asking a company to provide the names and contact information for people they have serviced before is also recommended. Another good idea is to make sure the cleaning professional you have chosen has an appropriate existing license

Once you have your air ducts and vents inspected and decided on when and where to have them cleaned, you can sit back, relax in your favorite armchair, and breathe easy.

About the Author

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