

health hints

Sneezing, Wheezing? Maybe It's Your Floor

(NAPSA)—When you get down to it, you can combat asthma. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, more than 17 million Americans have asthma, and approximately 40 million have allergies. Asthma is the leading cause of chronic illness in children and teens; the number of children with asthma has more than doubled between 1980 and 1995.

If your floors are carpeted, they're not helping. In fact, allergists have long recommended against using carpet for their patients with allergies or respiratory disorders.

First, carpet is home to thousands of dust mites. Each step on carpet can propel small clouds into the air that cause sneezing, wheezing and other reactions. Carpet can be treated for dust mites, but not permanently.

Second, pet dander in carpet fibers can reach "breathtaking" levels for those allergic to it; the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) reports it can stay in carpets for up to six weeks.

Third, caustic chemicals "off-gas" from carpet fibers, its adhesives or its stain-resistant finishes, according to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The Healthy Building Network adds that even vinyl flooring can leach dangerous substances—including phthalate, lead, cadmium and dioxins—not great news for anyone.

NIAID recommends that those with dust mite allergies remove carpet—especially in the bedroom, according to the American Academy of Family Physicians. But then what? Interestingly enough, a material that's been



Linoleum can be a decorative flooring option for people with allergies and asthma.

around for years might be just the thing: linoleum. Made from natural materials, linoleum is biodegradable and it doesn't "off-gas." Plus, it offers color, customization and 100 percent solvent-free adhesives.

"Our linoleum, called Marmoleum, can help people, particularly those with allergies or asthma, feel good in their homes," says Denis Darragh, president and general manager of Forbo Linoleum North America. "It has great design capability, with customization options and over 100 colors, as well as a positive effect on the environment. We recently introduced our 'Clean Living' Program, to reinforce Marmoleum's benefits with people who desperately need it for healthy reasons. It's a good choice—to create healthier, cleaner, good-looking environments beneficial to people and planet."

If you have allergies, asthma or other respiratory ailments, linoleum could be an easy, stylish way to feel better in your home. To learn more about Marmoleum, call 1-866-MARMOLEUM or visit www.themarmoleumstore.com.