



Child Asthma R_x : An R-2000 Home? "It's like a mother, it takes care of you."

What's happening to our children? Recorded rates of asthma have increased from 2.5% of Canadian children in 1978 to about 12% this year. For many, this is a distant, albeit important issue. For some, like Sharon, Ontario-based Susan and Nick Bourikas and their two sons, asthma is something very close to home.

George, the Bourikas' now twelve year-old son, suffered from severe asthma for years. In addition to being chronically short of breath, his mother says that he was plagued, almost daily, by a "series of nose bleeds and headaches." George's — and his family's — quality of life were greatly compromised.

Happily, all that has changed. The dramatic improvement in George's condition began almost immediately after the Bourikas family moved into an R-2000 home about four years ago. As George's mother reports: "A week after we moved in the nosebleeds stopped." The immediate improvement in George's condition has been lasting. His asthma is under control, the frequent piercing headaches of the past have disappeared, and he no longer requires any injections. He does require periodic use of a puffer, but this is primarily to control exercise-induced (that is, sports participation-related) asthma.

How much of the improvement is attributable to the R-2000 home? George's mother Susan is convinced that her family's housing choice has made all the difference in the world. She describes an R-2000 home as "the best place" for an asthmatic child and is convinced that living in such a structure is a prescription for helping "a child that has asthma." The benefits of superior air quality are not limited to George. As Mrs. Bourikas puts it: "Even for myself, when I stay in the house I feel a lot better."

Asthma is a chronic inflammation of the airways that is most often triggered by

allergens such as dust mites, cat hair, pollen and moulds. Avoiding allergens is key to controlling asthma. Too much moisture or humidity in a home can feed moulds and dust mites often making asthma more severe.

Though not quite as strong as Mrs. Bourikas' ringing endorsement, there is evidence to suggest that R-2000 homes can have a positive impact on those with asthma. In fact, a recent pilot study by CMHC and Health Canada has found that the better you eliminate the causes of a moldy basement, the greater the chance of lessening asthma symptoms. Moreover, a recent report from

makes a big difference. Typical R-2000 features such as mechanical air cleaners, and dedicated ventilation systems provide healthier indoor air quality. Moreover, R-2000 homes often use building materials that are less contaminated with chemical and biological toxins. Ross Reid, President and CEO of the Ontario Lung Association, notes the connection between housing and respiratory health: "R-2000 homes contain features specifically intended to improve indoor air quality and health."

For Susan Bourikas' family, the net result is better health. Susan likens her R-2000 home to a mother because it "keeps the family healthier...I really believe that it does." Though she appreciates other benefits of her home — the security of the solid construction, the lower heating bills, the low dust build-up,



Susan Bourikas and her two sons in their R-2000 home. George is on the far right.

the Institute of Medicine stated that: "There are both theoretical evidence and limited empirical data indicating that feasible modifications in ventilation rates can decrease or increase concentrations of some of the indoor pollutants associated with asthma by up to approximately 75%."

Increasingly, growth in asthma is blamed on trapped interior pollution resulting from inadequate building ventilation. This is an area in which an R-2000 home

and the absence of "drafts in the winter" and "condensation on window ledges" — it's the peace of mind that she truly values. Susan sees her R-2000 home as an important investment in her family's health and well-being.

For more information about R-2000 homes and their impact on air quality and health, contact EnerQuality Corporation (Tel.) 416-447-0077 (Web) www.r2000.org



R-2000 Home Meets a Sensitive Challenge

“I can’t live in regular housing.”

For most, a house is something you live in. For others, like Cathy Mathewson of Pottageville, Ontario, it’s something she can’t live without. But Cathy’s place is not ordinary — it’s an R-2000 home with features unavailable in regular housing. Her home is special because she’s special.

Cathy has what she describes as an environmental illness or chemical sensitivity. Everyday items — from perfume, to carpeting, to dust, to certain kinds of food — have the potential to trigger allergic, sometimes debilitating, reactions. “People don’t understand how serious the problem is,” says Cathy. For Cathy and others like her, air quality is critical. Avoiding allergens is a necessity. Her illness has a tremendous impact on the way and where she lives.

Canadians spend a lot of time in their homes, particularly during the colder winter months. Cathy is no exception. In fact, she likens her home to a “best friend” because it’s a place to “hang-out” and be comfortable. She needs a place she can truly live in and with. Not just any house will do — she knows that from experience. “I can’t live in regular housing” Cathy says. Her exhaustive research brought her to an R-2000 home where she has been living well for over five years with her husband and son.

Cathy’s home performs two essential tasks: it minimizes the number of potential allergens generated within the house, and it prevents outside allergens from getting in. A combination of air filtration, ventilation and conditioning systems keep air quality at its peak. Full-time mechanical air filters reduce dust, pollen and other potential allergens. A high efficiency heat recovery ventilator (HRV) ensures a continuous flow of fresh air — every room has a fresh air supply. The HRV can work

at higher speed for those times when allergen removal is most critical. Cathy finds the “shut-off valve for air intake of the HRV” invaluable. This feature prevents unwanted outside air from entering the house and is essential “when neighbours are spraying lawns” or there is lingering smoke from barbecues or burning brush.

The construction of Cathy’s R-2000 home, its super-insulation, and airtight

or those concerned about air quality than a well-designed R-2000 home that has been built with carefully selected materials” says John Godden, President of Alpha-Tec Consulting and Construction, an expert in this area. Aside from the personal benefits, Cathy is convinced that her R-2000 home has also “helped the health of the rest of the family.” She reports that her husband and son are ill less often than when they lived in a traditional house. But it’s not just the health benefits that are attractive. Cathy cites energy conservation, reduced heating bills and reduced noise from outside as



Cathy Mathewson breathing easier with her R-2000 home.

building envelope, together with the HRV help control excess moisture. Too much moisture or humidity in a home can feed mould and cause serious health problems. Many of the incredible features that make Cathy’s home so livable are standard in a typical R-2000 package.

“There really is no better house for people with an environmental sensitivity

real pluses. She recommends that homebuyers consider the R-2000 option. “It’s way above the regular standards of housing,” says Cathy.

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All the Comforts of Home

“Our R-2000 home is by far the best we’ve ever lived in.”

About 50 years. That’s how long retirees Doug and Lois Pearl of Bobcaygeon, Ontario have been married. Almost half a century of being together, sharing things big and small, and learning from life experience. Wisdom built up over time. An appreciation of what’s important and what’s not. An appreciation of quality and how to live well.

The Pearls are at the vanguard of significant demographic change in Canada. They are just ahead of a baby boom bulge that will deliver an unprecedented number of retirees over the next couple of decades. This groups’ numbers, disposable income, and passion for pursuing life to its fullest will make them an undeniable societal force. They will value and exercise their independence in many ways — including choices about how and where they live.

The Pearls are also at the vanguard of a different kind of change. As recent purchasers of an R-2000 home, they are among an ever-growing group of retirees and Canadians generally who are opting for what Doug calls an “extremely well built” house. This is no surprise to some of Canada’s homebuilders. Fred Reynolds of the Reynolds Group, an Ontario builder of R-2000 homes — named as the Ontario Builder of the Year for 2000 by the Ontario New Home Warranty Program — says that “many retirees I speak with want the very best in a home...they care a great deal about their health and the environment, appreciate technological innovation, and value attention paid to craftsmanship and detail.”

“Comfort” and “quality” are two words that Doug repeats in a conversation about his R-2000 home. “It’s virtually pollution free,” says Doug. His home’s heat recovery ventilator and mechanical air filter provide for a healthier living environment by delivering a

continuous supply of fresh air and reducing dust and odours. Doug says his R-2000 home is great at keeping out unwanted noise: “There have been times when a bulldozer would be operating next door and you’d hardly hear it.”

A continuous air barrier, higher levels of insulation, energy efficient windows and doors, and high efficiency heating and ventilation equipment make

top of the comfort, convenience and peace of mind are what Doug refers to as “considerable cost savings.” In fact, studies of R-2000 homes estimate annual heating bill savings of at least 20%.

All of this adds up to an R-2000 home that Doug calls “the most comfortable” and “by far the best home we’ve ever lived in.” For Doug and his wife, their R-2000 home is “part of our life...part of our being.” For them, it’s the right choice and the smart choice.

So, what’s Doug’s advice to recent retirees, aging baby boomers and fellow seniors who are living longer, keeping



An R-2000 home in Doug and Lois Pearl’s community.

it easier to heat and cool the house. In the summer, Doug says his “air conditioner is on very little...yet we stay very comfortable.” In winter, Doug says his R-2000 home “will maintain its temperature for quite awhile.” Heat retention is an important safety factor anywhere, but particularly in the Ontario countryside where winter storms — such as the ice storm of a few years ago — make prolonged power outages a real concern. On

active, and who value their health and care about the quality of their lives and the homes they live them in? “You need to understand what the R-2000 home is all about...it’s definitely the way to go.” Let’s just call that a Pearl of wisdom.

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