

Have you ever heard of the

"Pigpen Syndrome"?



Women's Institute members attending the Lennox & Addington District Annual meeting know what it is. Guest speaker Ron Bell of the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy spoke about indoor air quality. He stated that people spend less than ten percent of their time outdoors, and when you consider indoor concentrates of organic compounds are two to five times higher in the home than outdoors you realize the risk of pollution in the home.

Typical sources include odours and irritants, cigarette smoke, waxes and polishes, plastics and glues and resins. But the most prevalent and over-looked causes are personal care products, such as shampoos, hair sprays, colognes and powders. Now we come to the "Pigpen Syndrome," a term coined from that dusty character in the Peanuts comic strip. We breathe our own "cloud," which is called our breathing zone. When we inhale all these odours and irritants, they stay in our lungs for prolonged periods, so that we continue to breathe in what we breathe out.

The Women's Institutes in Lennox & Addington, Frontenac and Leeds Counties are taking part in a pilot project with the Kingston and Area Lung Association. WI volunteers will be carrying out a major mailing campaign (to 25,000 rural homes) of a brochure outlining Ten Actions consumers can take to decrease indoor pollutants.

This project is one of the outcomes of an Amherst Island Women's Institute resolution dealing with indoor air quality, and is certainly in keeping with the theme "Safe and Healthy Communities."

Submitted by Valerie Smith, Public Relations Officer, Lennox & Addington District.

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