

SPOTLIGHT

JONES-ONSLOW EMC—POWERING HOMES SINCE 1939



JULY 2022

Stay Fresh: Five Tips for Better Indoor Air Quality

Our homes are becoming more energy-efficient—they're better insulated and sealed with less ventilation—which is great for our energy bills but not so much for our indoor air quality.

The thought of breathing in pollutants can be scary, but the truth is that indoor air pollution is common and simply unavoidable. The good news is there are ways you can easily improve the air quality of your home.

Here are five tips to help you breathe a little easier—

1 CHANGE YOUR AIR FILTER OFTEN. Clogged and dirty filters reduce the amount of airflow and the HVAC system's efficiency. When a filter becomes too clogged, the excess dirt and dust are sent through your air ducts, adding unnecessary allergens and other unwanted particles into your living space. During the cooling season (summer months), the Department of Energy recommends replacing your air filter every month or two. This is one of the easiest ways to promote better indoor air quality and energy efficiency.

2 REGULARLY VACUUM CARPETS — especially if you have furry friends. The cleaner the home, the healthier the home. Vacuuming carpet and area rugs once a week can greatly reduce the accumulation of pet dander and dust inside your home. Frequently clean other areas that collect dust, like drapes, bedding, and cluttered areas.

3 USE VENTS TO REMOVE COOKING FUMES. Those exhaust fans aren't just for when you burn the bacon. Fans help remove fumes emitted while cooking and eliminate unwanted moisture and odors. They may be a bit noisy, but these handy tools can help you

improve indoor air quality while you're preparing that culinary masterpiece (or even a grilled cheese sandwich!).

4 GET A HANDLE ON HUMIDITY. Summer months typically bring more humidity than we'd like, especially if you live in a high-humidity climate zone. Moisture in the air can carry bacteria and other unwanted particles that you eventually breathe in. Dehumidifiers work to remove that moisture from the air, reducing the amount of bacteria, mold, and other allergens in your home.

5 INCORPORATE AIR-PURIFYING PLANTS INTO YOUR LIVING SPACE. Several indoor plants can help detoxify your home from dust and germs found in various home products, furniture, and other materials. A few low-maintenance, air-purifying plants to consider are snake, aloe vera, and pothos plants (also known as Devil's Ivy). These vibrant, lush plants are eye-catching and beneficial for any home. Remember to review care conditions and think about placement for any new plants you add to your home.

Taking simple steps to purify indoor air can improve health and overall quality of life. With a little effort, you can improve the indoor air quality of your home and breathe a bit easier.

We spend a lot of time indoors. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the average person spends 90% of their life indoors.



COMMUNITYFOCUS

Scholarships Awarded to Local Students



Annually, JOEMC funds scholarships for twenty-nine outstanding students in our communities. Twenty-five were graduating high school seniors, and four were community college students.

Some recipients were selected in conjunction with the Sponsors for Academic Talent and others were selected by local school staff. Students received their scholarships at various events held at their local school during May. The four community college students were selected by the local College Foundation at the college and were given their scholarship award letter during the academic year.

The \$1,000 scholarships will assist the youth as they continue their academic endeavors.

The cooperative is proud of these students and all of their achievements. Congratulations to all of you!

Congratulations!

- Dixon
Melissa Cowen
Brody Glavin
- Northside
Autumn Springfield
Ivan Wu
- Topsail
Mia Lawrence
Samina Wilson
- East Duplin
Allie Lanier
Michaela Sholar
- Richlands
Caroline Cubas
Ian Hudson
- White Oak
Laci Bullington
Dondre Joseph
- Jacksonville
Ava Merenda-Perozzi
Elijah Meyer
- South Lenoir
Natalie Dail
Kaeden M. Noble
- Onslow Early College
Stephanie Hernandez,
Andrew Zonneveld
- Jones Senior
Madison Aloia
Hailea Anderson
- Southwest
Anthony Iglesias
- CCCC
Stephanie R. Marshburn
Natalie Rego
- Lejeune
Naomi Gordon
Ian Russell
- Swansboro
Tyler Gillette
Alma Sanchez
- LCC
Nicholas Humphrey
Kristina Rappaport

MEMBERSERVICES

Take *it* Easy

From our 24/7 phone system to payment kiosks, online member portal, mobile app, and “Pay Where You Shop” options, paying your bill is easy.

Save your gas. Take the easy path to convenience.

See all the hassle-free ways to pay and manage your account at JOEMC.com/easy.



Know the Signs of a Scam



It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas, or electricity connection have long been targets of utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the Covid-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changing environment.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone, or text.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in person, by phone, text, or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment, so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, **call us at 910-353-1940**. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us, use our mobile app, or log in through the member portal to check your account status. Remember, JOEMC will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, **scammers can drain your account** and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone,

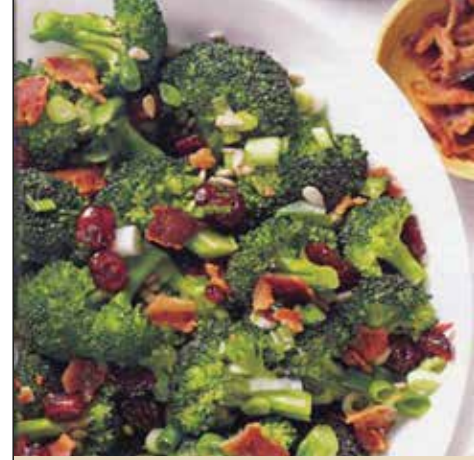
hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), **do not click any links**. Instead, delete it and, if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Jones-Onslow EMC will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. **When in doubt, contact us.**

Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

JOEMC employees wear work uniforms (including logoed polo shirts) and carry ID badges. When we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves. Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. **Please report any potential scams to us** so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.



Crunchy Broccoli Salad

Servings: 10

Ingredients

- 8 cups fresh broccoli florets (about 1 lb.)
- 1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 3 tablespoons seasoned rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ cup sunflower kernels
- 3 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine broccoli, green onions and cranberries.
2. In a small bowl, whisk oil, vinegar and sugar until blended; drizzle over broccoli mixture and toss to coat.
3. Refrigerate until serving. Sprinkle with sunflower kernels and bacon before serving.

New Ways to Use Electricity

If you listen carefully, you can hear a *quiet* transformation happening. Electric appliances and equipment are becoming more popular than ever among consumers.

Advancements in technology and battery power coupled with decreasing costs are winning over consumers looking for comparable utility and versatility. A bonus is that the use of electric equipment is quieter and better for the environment.

Inside the home, consumers and homebuilders are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings. Whether a traditional electric stove or an induction stove top, both are significantly more efficient than a gas oven. That's because conventional residential cooking tops typically use gas or resistance heating elements to transfer energy with efficiencies of approximately 32% and 75%, respectively (according to ENERGY STAR). Electric induction stoves, which cook food without any flame, will reduce indoor air pollution and bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove. Robotic vacuums are also gaining in popularity. Fortune Business Insights attributes the growth and popularity of robotic vacuums like Roomba to a larger market trend of smart home technology and automation (think Alexa directing a Roomba to vacuum).

More tools and equipment with small gas-powered motors are being replaced with electric ones that include plug-in batteries.

In the past few years, technology in battery storage has advanced significantly. Hand-held tools with plug-in batteries can hold a charge longer and offer the user the same versatility and similar functionality as gas-powered tools. For DIYers and those in the building trades, national brands such as Makita, Ryobi and Milwaukee offer electric versions of their most popular products like drills, saws, sanders and other tools. In addition to standard offerings, consumers can now purchase a wider array of specialty tools that plug-in such as power inverters, air inflators and battery chargers.

Keith Dennis, an energy industry expert and president of the Beneficial Electrification League, notes, "A few years back, the list of new electric product categories that were making their way to the market was limited—electric scooters, lawn mowers, leaf blowers and vehicles."

Today, the number of electrical products available is exploding.

"There are electric bikes, school buses, pressure washers, utility terrain vehicles, backhoes—even airplanes and boats," says Dennis. "With the expansion of batteries and advancements in technology, we are seeing almost anything that burns gasoline or diesel as having an electric replacement available on the market."

A case in point is the increased use of electric-powered tools and equipment,



Jones-Onslow EMC
CEO Jeffery T. Clark

with a broader selection of lawn mowers, leaf blowers, string trimmers and snow blowers. The quality of zero- or low-emissions lawn equipment is also improving.

Electric equipment also requires less maintenance, and often the biggest task is keeping them charged. In addition, electric equipment is quieter, so if you want to listen to music or your favorite podcast while performing outdoor work, you can; that can be difficult to do with gas-powered equipment. On the horizon, autonomous lawn mowers (similar to robotic vacuum cleaners) will be seen dotting outdoor spaces.

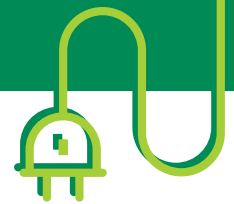
Another benefit of using electric appliances or equipment is that by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices improves over time. In essence, electricity is becoming cleaner through increased renewable energy generation, so equipment that uses electricity will have a diminishing environmental impact over time—quite a hat trick—improving efficiency, quality of life and helping the environment.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Maximize your HVAC system's performance by inspecting, cleaning, or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system.

Make sure vents and registers aren't blocked, so air can flow freely.

Source: Dept. of Energy



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