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What are some benefits of building green?

Building green means living better, smarter, and healthier. Just by choosing energy-efficient building materials and supplies, homeowners can make positive changes to both the inside and outside environments, creating homes that are better for you and our world.

Building green does not necessarily mean starting from scratch or spending a great deal more money. There are many ways to improve the green factor in existing homes by using longer-lasting and sustainable materials.

- Use energy-efficient light bulbs, install motion-sensing lighting, and unplug electronics when not in use.
- Seal air leaks at windows and doors.
- Install programmable thermostats that heat and cool at the time and temperature you need.
- Upgrade windows, heating, and air conditioning equipment.
- Change filters frequently.
- Install more insulation in walls, floors, and attics.
- Choose energy-efficient appliances.
- If you are building new, consider the best position on the lot for trapping light and energy, and make use of energy-efficient foundation, framing, plumbing, wiring, and HVAC systems now available.

Green homes are also healthier homes, reducing mold, mildew, and other allergens that contribute to asthma and other significant health issues. Below are tips for keeping your home dry and mold-free:

- Keep it dry: install a drain pan under the water heater; place dehumidifiers in basements and other damp areas; position downspouts away from the house; repair any water damage. Make sure the ground falls away from your foundation, if not, build a swell to block the water flow.
- Keep it clean: use track-off mats at all doorways; clean up dust to eliminate contaminants such as lead dust and allergens.
- Keep it ventilated: install or replace exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens (make sure they vent to the outside).
- Keep it contaminant-free: use wire shelving that doesn't collect dust; have your home tested for radon and lead-based paint.

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