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CLIMATE CHOICES WINTER WEATHERIZATION

## BEATING THE COLD SPELL

Blasting heat at home and still freezing? Here are several easy fixes to save money and stay warm.



Snow covers homes during a winter storm Jan. 6, 2025, in Cincinnati, Ohio. ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

By Caleigh Wells  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

It's that time of year again, when the fuzzy socks are working overtime, the heat is cranking and somehow lots of homes are still freezing.

That's because a lot of that heat leaks out of the house — and the colder it is outside, the faster the warm, inside air leaks out. There are ways to stay warm and save on heating costs that can be achieved though, through a quick trip to the local hardware store, a \$100 investment and a free afternoon.

It'll come in handy in the summer too when the same problem recurs, except you lose precious cool air to the sweltering outdoors.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that air leakage accounts for more than a quarter of the energy used to heat or cool a typical home. Experts say you can make a meaningful difference even without expensive solutions like whole-house insulation or replacing ductwork.

"It'll lower your utility bills, it'll make your home more comfortable and reduce your energy use," said Johanna Neumann, senior director with the advocacy organization Environment



Claude Blocton shovels the snow in front of his home Jan. 2 in Oak Park, Mich. THE DETROIT NEWS

America.

**FINDING, PLUGGING THE LEAKS**

Neumann said the first step to keep a home warm is finding the air leaks. The worst are detectable just by putting a hand up and feeling for a draft, say,

around the edge of a door.

Candles and incense are two effective and low-cost ways of finding air leaks. First, wait for a windy day and close all the windows and doors, Neumann said.

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**HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

## At-home STD tests offer new options for screening and treatment

By Matthew Perrone  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — New options for testing and treating some of the most common sexually transmitted diseases are becoming available, a trend that experts hope will keep downward pressure on U.S. infection rates.

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration approved the first at-home test that can detect three common infections in women — gonorrhea, chlamydia and trichomoniasis — as well as the first home-based kit for the virus that causes cervical cancer.

The agency ended the year by approving two different drugs for gonorrhea, the first new options for the disease in decades.

It's positive news after cases of sexually transmitted infections reached alarming highs before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted screening, education and treatment for sexual health nationwide.

But the pandemic years also brought positive developments for testing. The same technology used for the first over-the-counter coronavirus tests is now being translated into home-based kits for syphilis and other sexually transmitted infections. Previously, the FDA had mostly limited the

use of such tests to health professionals.

"Sexual health can be stigmatized and people can be hesitant about testing," said Dr. Ina Park, a sexual health specialist at the University of California, San Francisco. "Now we have a lot of options for patients who may be wary of going into a provider's office."

**NEW TESTS OFFER CONVENIENCE AND QUICKER TURNAROUND TIMES**

Testing company Visby Medical launched its three-in-one test for women last year, following FDA approval in

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Visby Medical's three-in-one gonorrhea, chlamydia and trichomoniasis test for women. VISBY MEDICAL VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

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