

AI-00894 Over-Cleanliness CondoLife Health Span

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Where is the line between normalcy vs excessive in the realm of condo living in retirement? Does humans really need to be in a super clean environment for longevity?

There's no one-size-fits-all answer on condo living for retirees. It depends on what you value most. Here's a breakdown of pros and cons to help you decide:

Pros of condo living:

- **Low maintenance:** No yard work, snow removal, or exterior maintenance to worry about.
- **Amenities:** Many condos offer pools, gyms, social spaces, and sometimes even on-site conveniences like restaurants or shops.
- **Security:** Gated entrances and security guards can provide peace of mind.
- **Socialization:** Condo communities can foster a sense of belonging and offer opportunities to meet new people.
- **Accessibility:** Condos are often located in walkable areas close to shops, restaurants, and healthcare facilities.

Cons of condo living:

- **HOA fees:** Monthly fees can cover maintenance, amenities, and insurance, but they add to your living expenses.
- **Less space:** Condos are generally smaller than houses.
- **Noise:** Sharing walls and ceilings with neighbors can mean more noise.

- **Less control:** You may have limitations on renovations or pets compared to a house.
- **Cleanliness standards:** Some condo communities may have stricter cleanliness rules for common areas.

On to clean living and longevity:

There's no evidence that a super sterile environment is necessary for a long life. In fact, some exposure to germs can help strengthen the immune system. However, a clean and safe living environment is important for overall health. This means keeping your condo free of mold, mildew, and pests.

Ultimately, the cleanliness level you prefer is a personal choice. If a spotless environment is important to you, condo living might be a good fit, especially if the community handles some of the cleaning chores.

List 20 behaviors showing signs of over-cleanliness in condo living in retirement life.

Here are 20 behaviors showing signs of over-cleanliness in condo living in retirement life:

1. **Disinfecting groceries and mail:** While wiping down high-touch surfaces like doorknobs is reasonable, going overboard on disinfecting groceries and mail is unnecessary and can remove some beneficial microbes.
2. **Wearing shoe covers indoors:** This might be necessary in specific situations, but constantly wearing shoe covers can isolate yourself from the natural world and potentially damage floors.
3. **Insisting guests wear shoe covers:** While some people prefer guests to remove shoes, insisting on shoe covers can come across as inhospitable.
4. **Keeping the thermostat very high or low to kill germs:** This is not only uncomfortable but also inefficient and expensive.
5. **Using harsh chemicals on every surface:** Many everyday messes can be cleaned with water, vinegar, or baking soda. Harsh chemicals can irritate skin and damage surfaces.

6. **Constantly wiping down counters after minimal use:** Kitchen counters do need cleaning after food prep, but a quick wipe after making a sandwich isn't necessary.
7. **Sanitizing doorknobs and light switches multiple times a day:** While these are germ hotspots, focusing on frequent handwashing is more effective.
8. **Getting upset if someone walks through the door with wet footprints:** Especially in condo living, a little courtesy goes a long way, but getting upset over minor things can strain relationships.
9. **Not allowing visitors with pets because of potential mess:** While having house rules regarding pets is okay, a blanket ban might be isolating.
10. **Complaining to neighbors about noise from everyday activities like walking or vacuuming:** Being mindful of noise is important, but condo living comes with some inherent noise levels.
11. **Having a designated "clean clothes" chair and refusing to sit anywhere else:** This can create unnecessary anxiety and make relaxing difficult.
12. **Insisting on using disposable plates and utensils even for casual meals:** This is wasteful and unnecessary for everyday use.
13. **Keeping windows and doors closed constantly to prevent dust:** Fresh air is important for health, and some dust is inevitable in any living space.
14. **Not allowing friends or family to help with chores because they "won't do it right":** Delegation can be a challenge, but it can also free up time for other activities.
15. **Spending an excessive amount of time cleaning every day:** While maintaining a clean space is good, neglecting other aspects of life for constant cleaning can be counterproductive.
16. **Feeling a constant low-grade anxiety if the condo isn't perfectly tidy:** Cleanliness is important, but stressing over minor imperfections can impact mental well-being.
17. **Avoiding social gatherings or outings for fear of bringing germs back into the condo:** Social interaction is important for mental and physical health, and complete isolation isn't healthy.

18. **Arguing with cleaning staff about their methods or insisting they re-clean everything:** Micromanaging cleaning staff can be disrespectful and create a strained work environment.
19. **Having stockpiles of cleaning products beyond what's reasonable for regular use:** While having some cleaning supplies on hand is good, excessive stockpiling can be a sign of underlying anxiety.
20. **Experiencing significant emotional distress if something spills or gets dirty:** Minor spills and messes are inevitable in everyday life. The ability to address them calmly is important.

Remember, a clean living space is important for health, but focusing on creating a sterile environment can be counterproductive. It's about finding a balance that promotes both physical and mental well-being.

Will over-cleanliness mindset shorten my health span or lifespan?

There's no direct scientific evidence that over-cleanliness shortens lifespan. In fact, some aspects of clean living can promote good health. For instance, reducing exposure to harmful germs and maintaining a clean kitchen to prevent foodborne illness are important.

However, over-cleanliness can have negative health consequences in a few ways:

- **Reduced exposure to beneficial microbes:** Our bodies need some exposure to germs to develop a strong immune system. Over-sanitizing everything might weaken the immune system in the long run.
- **Increased use of harsh chemicals:** Harsh cleaning products can irritate the skin and respiratory system, potentially leading to health problems.
- **Stress and anxiety:** Obsessing over cleanliness can cause undue stress and anxiety, which can negatively impact both physical and mental health.

So, while a clean environment is important, it's more about maintaining a healthy balance. Here's what you can do:

- **Focus on high-touch surfaces:** Regularly clean doorknobs, light switches, countertops, and other surfaces people frequently touch.

- **Use natural cleaning products whenever possible:** Vinegar, baking soda, and water are effective for many cleaning tasks.
- **Wash hands frequently:** This is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs.
- **Let in fresh air:** Open windows regularly to circulate air and reduce dust mites and mold.
- **Relax and don't sweat the small stuff:** Minor spills and messes are inevitable. Don't get stressed about keeping everything in a pristine state all the time.

If you find yourself constantly worried about germs or contaminants, it might be helpful to talk to a doctor or therapist. They can help you develop a more balanced approach to cleanliness and manage any underlying anxiety