

[Send to Printer](#)[<< Back to Article](#)

Local

Clean, safe home is a healthy home

Sara Michael, The Examiner

2007-06-12 07:00:00.0

Current rank: # 209 of 7,250

Howard County -

Labeling cleaning products and leaving shoes by the door may seem like small steps, but they can be great strides in promoting a healthy lifestyle, Howard officials said.

"You don't always think that much about the little things," County Executive Ken Ulman said Monday at the launch of the third phase in the county's Healthy Howard initiative.

Officials have set their scopes on houses for this step in a program aimed at making Howard a model public health community.

"This is the place you spend most of your time and how it's maintained truly affects your health," Howard County Health Officer Peter Beilenson said.

For example, two common triggers of asthma are cockroach parts and mouse urine, Beilenson said.

Officials will monitor data such as reports of asthma attacks, fire-related injuries and medication misuse, Beilenson said.

The county also enforces property maintenance codes on rental property, monitoring issues such as peeling paint and leaking roofs.

Healthy houses also can be a result of well-planned communities, such as those with pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, said Rebecca Morley, executive director of the National Center for Healthy Housing, a nonprofit based in Columbia.

"We can design communities for good health," she said, crediting Columbia founder James Rouse for creating a town founded on values of diversity and open space.

SEVEN WAYS TO HAVE A HEALTHY HOME

- » Keep the house dry by making sure the basement floor has drains and the roof doesn't leak
- » Keep the house clean by leaving shoes by the door, reducing clutter and not using air fresheners that can cause allergic reactions
- » Keep the house pest-free by clearing the sink of dishes, blocking pest entries and sealing food
- » Keep the house ventilated by making sure bathrooms, dryers and fireplaces have vents and installing carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
- » Keep the house safe by labeling and properly storing cleaning products
- » Avoid contaminants by reducing peeling paint and mold
- » Maintain the house by taking out trash and cleaning all areas

Source: Howard County health officials

smichael@baltimoreexaminer.com

Examiner