



# WORKING TOWARDS HEALTHY HOUSING

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Healthy Homes Program helps make our home safer. The Program provides homeowners and rental property owners with practical information about how to prevent *health* and *safety* hazards.

# Healthy Homes PROGRAM



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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control







# Making Your Home a Healthier and Safer Place to Live.

## Asthma and Allergies

Asthma attacks can be triggered by allergens in the home, including mold, dust mites, rodents, excess dust, and second-hand smoke.

**To help reduce asthma and allergy symptoms:**

- **Achieve good indoor air quality.** Maintain a well ventilated home, free of pollutants such as tobacco smoke and carbon monoxide.
- **Use dust mite mattress and pillow covers.** Wash bedding in hot water, greater than 130F, every week to kill dust mites.
- **Eliminate cockroaches and pests.** Use gel baits, seal cracks, and eliminate sources of food and water. Thoroughly clean the home to eliminate roach dust.

## Mold and Moisture Control

Mold and moisture increase allergen substances that can trigger illness and asthma and cause building deterioration. Mold may be present in places where excess moisture or water damage has occurred.

**To prevent mold and moisture hazards in the home:**

- **Vent clothes dryers and exhaust fans to the exterior.** Be sure not to vent dryers or fans into crawl spaces or attics.
- **Repair water leaks.** Immediately fix plumbing leaks and leaks that allow rainwater into the home.
- **Replace water-damaged materials.** Replace materials when surfaces have been wet for more than 48 hours. Remove stored materials, such as cardboard boxes, in damp basements.
- **Insulate cold water pipes.** Uninsulated pipes cause condensation and excess moisture.
- **Routinely check and clean gutters** so runoff is diverted from the foundation.

## Home Safety and Unintentional Injuries

Unintentional injuries from falls, poisoning, choking, and suffocation, are the number one killer of children in America. Many of these injuries can be prevented with low-cost measures and proper education.

**Take the following steps to help increase home safety:**

- **Install and routinely test smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms.** Also, never use the kitchen stove or oven to heat your home. Always turn on the kitchen exhaust fan when cooking.
- **Eliminate tripping hazards.** Pick up hazards such as toys or shoes. Repair cracked or worn stairs. Use non-skid mats and throw rugs.
- **Poison-proof your home or property.** If children are present, install safety latches on all cabinets and drawers that contain harmful products. Keep medicines in a locked cabinet out of children's reach, and properly dispose of expired medicines or when they are no longer needed.
- **Keep firearms in locked cabinets and use trigger locks.**

**To find out how you can get involved with the Healthy Homes Program or to read more about the program's benefits please visit the Web site at [www.hud.gov/healthyhomes](http://www.hud.gov/healthyhomes).**

### Additional Resources

**CDC National Center for Environmental Health—[www.cdc.gov/nceh/](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/)**

**EPA Indoor Air Quality—[www.epa.gov/iaq/](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/)**

**EPA Office of Children's Health Protection—[www.epa.gov/children/](http://www.epa.gov/children/)**

**USDA - HUD Healthy Home Partnership—[www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/](http://www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/)**

**National Institute for Standards and Technology's Building and Fire Research Laboratory—[www.nist.gov/](http://www.nist.gov/)**

## Lead Hazards

In many homes built before 1978, deteriorating lead paint causes lead hazards in dust and soil. Young children, pregnant women, and pets can ingest this dust and soil and become poisoned.

**To prevent lead poisoning in children that live in homes built before 1978:**

- **Repair peeling and deteriorating paint.** Always use lead-safe work practices when disturbing paint that may contain lead. To find a qualified lead service provider please visit [www.leadlisting.org](http://www.leadlisting.org). To find out about lead-safe work practices please visit [www.hud.gov/offices/lead](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead).
- **Keep children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, pets, and others not working on the jobs away from renovation or remodeling work areas.** Young children and pregnant women could be exposed to high levels of lead dust while repairs are under way.
- **Reduce lead risks by teaching children to wash their hands often and to put only food in their mouths.**
- **Prevent dust from spreading.** Clean hard surfaces in your home with a wet mop or rag. Use a HEPA (high efficiency) vacuum when cleaning carpets. Household vacuums may scatter the lead-contaminated dust throughout your home.

## Indoor Air Quality

Children spend most of their time indoors. For their size, children breathe up to twice as much air as adults. That means children are at greater risk for health problems that come from indoor air pollution.

**To prevent poor indoor air quality in homes:**

- **Service gas and oil appliances regularly.** Avoid inefficient burning of gas and oil that can contaminate the air.
- **Store solvent chemicals away from the home.** Properly dispose of solvent chemicals you don't need. Open windows or use fans to let in fresh air whenever someone uses solvent chemicals in the home or garage.
- **Air-out new carpets and furniture.** Let new carpets, furniture, and building materials air out at least a day before bringing it to your home. If possible, open windows for several days after installing carpet.
- **Avoid smoking in your home or car and never smoke near children.**