

## Seven Tips for Keeping a Healthy Home

1. **Keep it Dry** Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in roof and windows. Check interior plumbing and drainage around your home for any leaking.
2. **Keep it Clean** Control the source of dust and contaminants by creating smooth and cleanable surfaces, reducing clutter, and using effective cleaning methods.
3. **Keep it Safe** Store poisons out of the reach of children. Store firearms unloaded and locked. Secure loose rugs and keep children's play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces. Install and test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand.
4. **Keep it Aired-Out** Open windows and use fans to ventilate bathrooms and kitchens. Air out the whole house to supply fresh air and reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home.
5. **Keep it Pest-Free** All pests look for food, water, and shelter, so seal cracks and openings in your home and store food in pest-resistant containers. If needed, use sticky-traps and baits, and place them out of the reach of children.
6. **Keep it Toxic-Free** Store pesticides and other chemicals in locked cabinets out of children's reach. Test your home for radon. Reduce lead-related hazards in pre-1978 homes by fixing deteriorated paint, and keeping floors and window areas clean using a wet cloth.
7. **Keep it Well-Maintained** Inspect, clean, and repair your home routinely. Take care of minor repairs and problems before they become large repairs and problems.



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# A Healthy Home



Simple steps to make your home a safer and healthier place

Most people spend at least half of every day inside their homes.

A healthy and safe home can protect you and your family from illness and injury.

In this brochure you will learn more about how to:

- Improve indoor air quality
- Reduce asthma and allergy symptoms
- Use products safely
- Protect your child from lead poisoning
- Prevent unintentional injuries



## Indoor Air Quality

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

To improve indoor air quality in your home:

- **Keep your home and car smoke-free.** Never smoke near children.
- **Keep your home well ventilated.** When weather permits, open windows and doors to increase fresh air in your home.
- **Keep dust from spreading out into the air.** Clean surfaces with a wet mop or rag.
- **Replace older heating stoves** with a cleaner burning gas, pellet, or EPA and Washington State certified wood stove.
- **Prevent mold growth.** Repair water leaks immediately, replace water damaged materials.
- **Test for radon in your home** with a home test kit. Radon can seep into your home from the ground.

## Lead Hazards

Homes built before 1978 may have been painted with lead-based paint.

As painted surfaces age (peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking, or damaged), lead dust is created. Children can be poisoned when lead dust gets on their hands and toys and enters their mouths.



### To protect your child from lead poisoning:

- **Wash your children's hands often**, especially before eating or sleeping and after playing outside. This will reduce the chance of lead dust entering their mouths.
- **Keep lead-contaminated dust from spreading into the air.** Clean surfaces with a wet mop or rag. Use a HEPA (high efficiency) vacuum when cleaning carpets. Household vacuums may scatter the lead-contaminated dust.
- **Always use lead-safe work practices** when renovating or doing home repairs on paint that may contain lead.
- **Be aware of other sources of lead exposure** such as traditional remedies, imported candies, cosmetics, recalled toys, and tap water in water systems that use lead pipes.
- **A blood lead test** is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning. Discuss with your physician.

## Product Safety

Chemicals found in common household products can be harmful to children if not used safely.

### To use products more safely:

- **Choose safer cleaning products.** Read labels and follow instructions on cleaning and pesticide products. Avoid products labeled "Danger" or "Poison."
- **Reduce the use of pesticides around your home.** Learn about safer ways to control insects, weeds, and rodents at [NPIC.orst.edu/pest/ipm.html](http://NPIC.orst.edu/pest/ipm.html).
- **Store cleaning and pest control products safely.** Keep them locked up away from children.
- **Check for recalled products in the home.** Toys and other products that are unsafe are recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov).
- **Dispose of unwanted household hazardous waste properly.** Contact your local solid waste utility to learn more about safe disposal.



## Unintentional Injuries

Unintentional injuries are the number one killer of children in America, many can be prevented.

### To help prevent unintentional injuries:

- **Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.** Maintain and service your gas and oil appliances. Never use your gas stove or oven to heat your home. Do not use generators or BBQs indoors.
- **Eliminate tripping hazards.** Pick up toys. Repair cracked or worn stairs. If there are rugs in your house, use non-skid mats.
- **Poison-proof your home.** If children are present, install safety latches on cabinets and drawers that contain harmful products. Keep cleaning supplies and medicines in locked cabinets.
- **Keep guns away from children.** If you have guns in the house, keep them unloaded, locked up, and separate from the ammunition.
- **Be watchful around water.** Never leave young children alone in the bathtub. Watch them at all times around pools and hot tubs.



## Asthma, Allergens, & Irritants

Asthma attacks can be triggered in the home by allergens or irritants.

### To help reduce asthma and allergy symptoms:

- **Follow steps** under the "Improve Indoor Air Quality" section of this brochure.
- **Do not use fragrances.** Fragrances and air fresheners can trigger asthma attacks.
- **Consider purchasing a HEPA filter** if someone in your home has asthma.
- **Control dust mites.** Wash sheets and blankets weekly in hot water. Vacuum carpets and furniture weekly.
- **Eliminate cockroaches and pests.** Use gel baits and seal cracks. Avoid using bug bombs.



Detailed information on these topics can be found at:

[doh.wa.gov/healthyhomes](http://doh.wa.gov/healthyhomes)