

A SELF HELP Guide to Healthy Homes

for American Indian and
Alaska Native Families






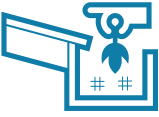










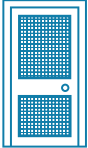





- The Eight Principles of a Healthy Home
- Key Questions to Ask About Your Home



www.hud.gov/healthyhomes



Keep Your Home Healthy and Safe

Every Day	Every Week	Every Month	Every 6 Months	Every Year
 <p>Turn on the bathroom fan while taking a bath or shower.</p>	 <p>Change and wash bedding.</p>	 <p>Check your air filter and replace if necessary. (Replace every 3 months).</p>	 <p>Clean your gutters of leaves and debris.</p>	 <p>Treat deck/patio for mold and mildew.</p>
 <p>Put trash in garbage cans (do not allow to build up).</p>	 <p>Vacuum (with HEPA filter) carpeting and sweep/wet clean floors.</p>	 <p>Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (change batteries every 6 months).</p>	 <p>Clean your kitchen exhaust fan and filter.</p>	 <p>Deep clean and inspect your basement.</p>
 <p>Wipe countertops in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry room.</p>	 <p>Clean bathrooms and kitchens.</p>	 <p>Trim trees and bushes. Clear leaves and debris from around your home and roof.</p>	 <p>Test your GFCI outlets.</p>	 <p>Inspect screens and replace any that have holes.</p>
 <p>Keep floors dry and clean.</p>	 <p>Remove clutter. Dust surfaces of furniture and blinds.</p>	 <p>Check for water leaks, inspect sump pump (if applicable).</p>	 <p>Check all locks and deadbolts on your doors and windows.</p>	 <p>Inspect roof for cracks, leaks, or broken shingles/tiles.</p>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes

April 2020



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



Helping American Indians and Alaska Natives Have Safe and Healthy Homes

How do you know if your home is a safe and healthy home?

This self-help guide is intended to help Native Americans (American Indian and Alaska Native) learn about potential hazards inside your home - and what to do about these hazards. All residents can benefit, whether you live in Alaska or in the lower 48 states, and regardless of type of home, whether in rural or more urban areas. Any family member who learns more about what actions to take, can make a difference!

A safe and healthy home is a home that is maintained by residents to avoid injuries and illness to all who live there. Common indoor health concerns include lead hazard control, air quality, mold and moisture, pest management, and injury prevention.



HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes also has another brochure that can help, Everyone Deserves a Safe and Healthy Home. This publication also highlights how a single unhealthy housing problem can lead to multiple health effects on you and family members. It can be downloaded at: <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/SAFEANDHEALTHYHOME.PDF>

The Eight Principles of a Healthy Home described on the next page are some basic things to be aware of and take actions around. For example, how do you know if your home has asthma triggers or lead?


After reading the Eight Principles on the next page, do a "check-up" of your home, by answering the questions that follow. **Then, contact your health department, social services agency, or appropriate tribal entity, to see if they can provide a healthy homes assessment.** If you are unable to get a healthy homes assessment in your area, use the checklist on page 20. You can also use a simple tool at <https://healthyhomes.fcgov.com/>

The Eight Principles of a Healthy Home - The Cornerstone


HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes defines [Eight Principles of a Healthy Home](#).

Briefly, they are:


1 Keep it dry:
Prevent water from entering the home through leaks in roofing systems, prevent rainwater from entering the home due to poor drainage, and check interior plumbing for any leaking.




2 Keep it clean:
Control the source of dust and contaminants, creating smooth and cleanable surfaces, reducing clutter, and using effective wet-cleaning methods, such as gentle washing with soap or safe cleaning products.




3 Keep it safe:
Store poisons out of the reach of children and properly label. Secure loose rugs and keep children's play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand.




4 Keep it well ventilated:
Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens and, if possible, use whole-house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home.




5 Keep it pest-free:
All pests look for food, water, and shelter. Seal cracks and openings throughout the home; store food in pest-resistant containers. If needed, use sticky-traps and baits in closed containers, along with least-toxic pesticides such as boric acid powder.



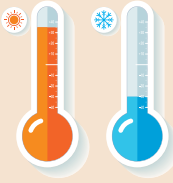
6 Keep it contaminant-free:
Reduce lead-related hazards in pre-1978 homes by fixing deteriorated paint and keeping floors and window areas clean using a wet-cleaning approach. Test the home for radon, a naturally occurring dangerous gas that enters homes through soil, crawlspaces, and foundation cracks. Install a radon removal system if levels above the EPA action level are detected.



7 Keep it well maintained:
Inspect, clean, and repair the home routinely. Take care of minor repairs and problems before they become large repairs and problems.



8 Keep it thermally controlled:
Houses that do not maintain adequate temperatures may place the safety of residents at increased risk from exposure to extreme cold or heat.



Ten Important Questions to Ask About Your Home

Ask yourself these important questions about your home and how you live in it. By answering them, you can find out if your home is healthy. **A home assessment, which you do with a housing professional, will also cover many of these questions.**

1. Was your home built before 1978?

Many houses and apartments built before 1978 have paint that contains high levels of lead (called lead-based paint). Lead from paint, chips, and dust can pose serious health hazards if not taken care of properly. Lead poisoning is one of the biggest health risks for young children at home. **Even children who appear healthy can have dangerous levels of lead in their bodies.**

Lead can permanently damage your nervous system, including your brain. It can cause permanent learning and behavior problems in children. It can also permanently affect your hearing.



Lead can permanently damage your nervous system, including your brain. It can cause permanent learning and behavior problems in children. It can also permanently affect your hearing.

Key Actions

- **Children at one and two years old should be tested each year by visiting a doctor or health clinic. You should continue testing children six years old or younger if there is exposure to lead in your home.** A blood test can be done by a pediatrician. For more information about lead hazards, call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323). This number, and all the phone numbers in this guide, may also be reached by people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities, by teletype at 711.

- Test your drinking water, paint, and soil for contamination, in and around your round your house, using a certified lead risk assessor. (Test tap water and other water sources every two years). You can find a certified water tester at: <https://www.epa.gov/dwlabcert> If you are unable to talk with a certified lead risk assessor, discuss getting your water tested by a nearby water utility. If you get your water from a well, contact your health or housing departments about getting your water tested for lead. Since 1986 only “lead free” pipe, solder or flux can be legally used in the installation or repair of any plumbing in residential or non-residential facilities providing water for human consumption, which is connected to a Public Water System.
- If you have questions or concerns about your drinking water, call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791 or visit <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water>. Information about protecting private drinking water wells is available at <https://www.epa.gov/privatewells>.
- See the Resources section in this booklet, especially the *Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home* booklet.



Don't allow smoking in your home. Ask family members or guests to smoke outside.

2. Do people smoke in your home?

Tobacco smoke (cigarettes, pipes, cigars, hookahs, and e-cigarettes) can cause or aggravate severe health problems. A tobacco-free home is a healthier environment for everyone. There is a long history of the ceremonial smoking of tobacco in tribal communities, but now most people smoke tobacco products as a personal choice. Smokers become addicted to the nicotine in tobacco products.

Key Actions

- Don't allow smoking in your home. Ask family members or guests to smoke outside.
- Visit www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/american-indians/index.htm.
- If you smoke and you are interested in quitting, you can call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline (800) QUIT-Now, or the American Lung Association, at (800) LUNG-USA for help.

Prevent Devastating Fires and Deadly Burns

Fire and burns are a danger to all family members. Plan and practice a fire escape route with your family.

Key Actions

- Put a smoke alarm on every floor of your home and near every sleeping area. You should install smoke alarms with sealed 10-yr batteries. A major cause of smoke alarm failures is batteries being removed. If you can afford one, buy a combination smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detector. A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm is one of the best and cheapest ways to be warned early of a potentially deadly fire.
- Playing with fire - matches, lighters, stoves or heaters - is the leading cause of fire-related deaths for children 5 and under. Storing matches, lighters, and other heat sources in a safe place like a locked drawer will help keep children from playing with them.
- Space heaters such as electric or kerosene heaters cause the most burns at home. Keep these heaters out of doorways and all busy areas, and at least 3 feet from curtains, bedding, carpet, and other things that could catch fire. Teach children that heaters will burn. You might consider putting a barrier to keep children and pets away.
- In addition to the above key actions, you should consider buying renter's or homeowner's insurance.

Many Native Americans use wood burning stoves or fireplaces as their primary heat sources. Be aware that smoke from wood burning contains a mixture of gases and soot that can cause health problems such as burning eyes, runny nose, and illnesses such as bronchitis. Burn wood safely. Wood smoke can affect everyone, but children, teenagers, older adults, people with lung disease (including asthma and COPD), and people with heart diseases are the most vulnerable.



Key Actions

- Have your fireplace or wood stove inspected each year (or at least when the air gets smoky in the room) for carbon monoxide leaks. Chimney companies or heating and cooling repair companies can check for CO.
- Learn more about the health effects of wood smoke and how to protect your family at <https://www.epa.gov/burnwise>.
- See the Resources section in this booklet.



Mold may begin growing indoors and be seen when these mold spores land on surfaces that are wet or in rooms that are humid.

Many people are allergic or sensitive to mold. Most people are not born with mold allergies or sensitivities but develop them after chronic (ongoing) exposure to molds in their home. Chronic exposure to mold may also cause asthma to develop.

If you have allergy problems or asthma at home, but not when you're away, you may have mold growing in your home. If you have mold in your home, you may have trouble breathing, or have wheezing, runny nose, headaches, itching, or watery eyes. Damp or humid areas (often with a musty odor) of your home can also cause these symptoms in people with asthma.

Mold is usually found in areas of high humidity (kitchen, bathroom) or moisture (roof and pipe leaks). Mold can grow on walls, clothes or appliances. It also can grow in hidden places like behind walls, in attics, and under carpet. Mold can smell musty. A musty odor usually means mold is alive and growing.

3. Are any of the areas or rooms in your home damp or moist?

Molds are part of nature, but inside your home mold growth should be avoided. Mold spreads in tiny spores that are too small to see. The spores float through the indoor air of your home. Mold may begin growing indoors and be seen when these mold spores land on surfaces that are wet or in rooms that are humid. Damp and humid areas of your home can also be a hazard, even without mold.

Key Actions

- Open doors and/or windows to prevent mold from forming if the outdoor humidity is less than 50% (not stuffy or muggy).
- Keep the humidity in your home less than 50%. Use a dehumidifier if your home is too humid.
- Install and use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Clean up water and puddles from leaking pipes, sinks, toilets, ceiling or walls, and fix leaks right away.
- Make sure your dryer vents to the outside.
- Keep gutters and downspouts clear and make sure downspouts direct water away from your foundation.
- Small amounts of mold can be removed with laundry detergent or dishwater soap in water and scrubbing with a stiff brush, but use eye protection, rubber gloves, and a dust mask (N-95 on the label).
- See the Resources section in this booklet.



Install and use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens.

4. Do members of your family have asthma or wheezing?

Asthma is a lung disease. A total of 40 to 50 million people have allergies or asthma in the United States, with more than seven million of those being children. An allergy is an unusual reaction to something that you eat or breathe. Asthma makes it hard to breathe. If you have asthma, your chest often feels tight, your breathing sounds raspy, and you are wheezing and experience coughing. Allergies can cause a runny nose, watery eyes and sneezing. Allergies can also affect your skin with a rash or itching.

There are many items in the home environment that can cause asthma attacks, and they are called “triggers.” An example of a trigger is pollen from trees and flowers. Other triggers come from chemicals, dogs and cats,



cockroaches, mice, mold, and cigarette smoke. Some of these triggers are very small dust mites, or tiny “bugs” that you can’t see. They live where there is high humidity - in carpets, bedding, furniture, and stuffed animals.



Frequently clean and replace air filters every three months. Use a filter that is labeled a MERV 8 or higher if you have pets.



Using a vacuum cleaner that has a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter will help control very fine dust and particles.

Key Actions

- Wash bedding in hot water and detergent every week.
- Use the highest dryer heat the clothing care label recommends and make sure the clothing is dry.
- Vacuuming: On carpets, using a vacuum cleaner that has a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter will help control the very fine dust and particles.
- Frequently clean and replace air filters every three months. Use a filter that is labeled a MERV 8 or higher if you have pets. More frequent filter replacement is necessary when the home is near wildfires.
- Eliminate pests in your home (see section 7).
- Avoid smoking inside your home (see section 2).
- If you heat or cook with wood or other fuels, make sure the fireplace or stove is well vented (see section 5).
- Substitute milder cleaners for strong cleaners such as bleach and ammonia that can trigger asthma. (see section 8).
- See the Resources section in this booklet.

Renting Your Home?

If you are a tenant and renting your home, many hazards will have to be reported to and handled by your property manager/landlord. Here are many common problems:



- Check for signs of high humidity, such as condensation on windows, or mold on walls or ceilings. Use fans while cooking or showering, or open windows.
- Search for peeling paint, inside and out. Ask the property manager/landlord to test for lead if your home was built before 1978.
- Get loose or broken handrails, stairs or decking fixed.
- Look for water leaks under sinks and around toilets and follow up.
- Look for signs of rodent or cockroach infestation and follow up.
- Make sure air conditioners and furnaces are being serviced regularly.
- Look for any damage to a woodstove, such as broken seals or gaskets, a loose door or cracked glass. Alert your property manager.
- Check on overloading of electrical outlets; outages will occur if too many appliances are being used at once.
- Shoe-free homes will reduce dirt (and germs and chemicals) that is brought in - at a minimum, put door mats at each entrance.
- Do not let pregnant women or children come in contact with weed killers or other poisons. Meet with the property manager to see about alternatives.
- Empty water collection tank of a dehumidifier before it is full.
- Have the property manager/landlord test the water pipes connecting the home to the water main and the water pipes inside the home for lead. Lead pipes are more likely to be found in homes built before 1986.

Report any of these conditions or situations to your property manager/landlord – promptly!



Exposure to CO can be a major threat to you and your family's health.

5. Do you use gas, propane, or wood for cooking or heating?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a dangerous gas and it is not safe to breathe. You can't see, taste, or smell it. **You should always have a CO alarm in your home.** If you are exposed to CO, you might get headaches, upset stomach, vomiting, dizziness, weakness, or confusion.

Severe cases can cause brain damage, blindness, deafness, heart problems, or death. Exposure to CO can be a major threat to you and your family's health.

Fuel burning appliances and automobiles are the main source of carbon monoxide in your home. They use natural gas, gasoline, kerosene, coal, propane, oil, or wood. CO can be produced if fuel burning appliances aren't vented to the outside or are not working correctly.

Also, if not ventilated properly, these appliances can pollute indoor air in other ways as well such as small particles and other gases that can irritate the lungs and eyes. It is especially a concern for people with chronic health conditions such as asthma, COPD, and heart disease.

Key Actions

- Have a professional check your furnace, water heater, gas appliances, flues, chimneys and fireplaces each year for carbon monoxide leaks. This can be done by a furnace repair company.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm (a combination smoke and CO alarm if possible) on each floor near bedrooms and in every room that has a furnace, gas or wood burning stove, oven, water heater, or similar appliance. If you can find one, you should install an alarm with sealed 10-yr batteries. A major cause of alarm failures is batteries being removed. Check the batteries twice a year (if the batteries can be removed). Carbon monoxide is lighter than air, so placement of the detector is important in the installation or use of a detector. The detector should be placed near or on the ceiling, if possible. Also, attached garages **MUST** have the entry door to the home interior closed and door seals working properly to keep exhaust gas from entering home.

- Don't leave the car running in the garage, even if the door is open.
- Make sure that all gas appliances and wood burning stoves are ducted (vented) to the outside.

6. Has your home been checked for radon?

Radon comes from the natural radioactive breakdown of uranium and other radioactive elements in soil, rock, and water, and can get into the air you breathe. Radon is estimated to cause thousands of deaths each year. When you breathe air containing radon, you can get lung cancer.

Smokers have a higher risk from the impacts of radon. Radon typically moves up through the ground to the indoor air in your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation, basement, or crawl space. Your home traps radon inside, where it can build up. Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon. Some areas of the country have higher levels of radon than others.

Key Actions

- Have your home tested for radon. High levels can be dangerous! Visit the website <https://sosradon.org/> for information on testing your home or how to contact a radon specialist in your area.
- See the Resources section in this booklet.

7. Does your home have bugs or rodents that you cannot get rid of?

Pests are unwanted living things in or around your home and include bugs or rodents that get inside. Pests may also include bed bugs which are small insects that feed on the blood of humans and animals. Inside your home, mice, rats and cockroaches may trigger asthma attacks. Insects and rodents can also get into your food.

Mice and rats can chew on electrical wires and cause fires. Bites of rats, fleas, ticks and certain spiders can make your family ill. Some pests and bugs spread diseases. Pests travel into your home from outdoors or other



Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon



places and they are looking for food, water and shelter. Pests often enter your home through gaps or openings in walls, doors or windows, but can also be carried inside by pets.

Key Actions

- Store food (including pet food) in tightly sealed containers.
- Clean up after cooking and eating.
- Seal up cracks around exterior doors, windows, pipes, and other holes to the outside.
- Indoor pesticide use isn't encouraged. However, if you use pesticides read and follow the label carefully. Do not use pesticide foggers (also called bug bombs) for controlling cockroaches or bed bugs. Research has shown that they are not effective and can be dangerous.
- More information on Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which focuses on pest prevention and uses pesticides only as needed) and safe pest control is available at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides> and www.stoppests.org.
- See the Resources section in this booklet.



8. Are sprays, cleaners, and poisons close to where children may be able to reach them?

A hazardous household chemical is a product you use around the house that can be harmful or poisonous if not used properly. Deadly accidents can happen if products are misused, stored or disposed in the wrong way. Some hazardous products may burn or poison you.

Many household chemicals also contain products that are known to cause cancer or birth defects. Other products poison you when you breathe them. You might feel sick to

your stomach, dizzy, or your eyes might water, sting or hurt. Common reactions are also headaches or a stuffy nose.

Examples of hazardous household chemicals include cleaning supplies, medicines, pesticides, fertilizers, polishes, glues, batteries, paint, mercury thermometers, oil, and gasoline.

Follow exact instructions and store properly as green cleaning supplies can be a health hazard if mixed or stored incorrectly.

Key Actions

- Use safe (non-toxic) cleaning products. **If a family member is exposed to, breathes in, or swallows a household chemical, call the Poison Control Center Hotline at 1-800 222-1222.** (This number may also be reached by people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities, by teletype at 711.)
- Always keep household chemicals and medicines in their original containers and stored out of reach of children. You can protect children with plastic childproof locks on cabinets and doors.
- Follow the instructions on the label including wearing proper clothing and protection such as eye goggles and gloves.
- See the Resources section in this booklet.



Many household products release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air.

9. Is it hard to keep your house warm in the winter or cool in the summer?

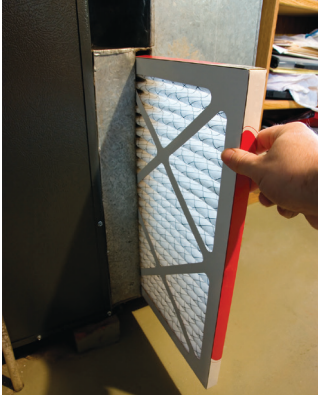
A healthy home has comfortable temperature and humidity levels. Older homes were constructed with materials and methods that are not very energy-efficient and can let heat escape in the winter and cool air escape



Tools You Can Use

Learn as much as you can about home health and safety. Download the Healthy Homes Basics App at apple.com/itunes/ or play.google.com/store. This can help everyone in the family!

- Connect to resources you need
- Take quizzes to test your awareness
- Check each room in your house



Clean or change the air filters when they are dirty (usually every three months).

Replace window blinds that have looped chords, which may cause strangulation if not stored or set out of the reach of children. ▼



in the summer. Many newer homes are built more “tightly” (less gaps and holes in the outside walls) and keep cool air inside during the summer and hot air inside during the winter.

Homes that do not have comfortable temperatures may place your family at increased risk from exposure to extreme cold and heat. High temperature and humidity in a home can make asthma, mold, and other indoor pollution worse, as well as general discomfort for your family. Cold or hot conditions in the home can be especially dangerous for seniors and people with chronic illnesses. Homes with temperature and humidity control problems are often drafty, have no or little insulation in walls and attics, and have heating or cooling systems that need repair or maintenance.

Key Actions

- Have the heating and air conditioning systems serviced yearly by a qualified professional.
- Clean or change the air filters when they are dirty (usually every three months). Homes with pets or smokers should change their filters more often.
- Consider having a home energy audit from your utility company or local housing authority.
- If your home is drafty or difficult to keep at a comfortable temperature, look into getting it weatherized, which includes sealing cracks and improving insulation. Check with your local housing agency or health department for programs that provide this improvement.
- See the Resources section in this booklet.

10. What are other home safety concerns and hazards?

Your chances of getting hurt at home are much higher than at work or school. Very young children and older adults are the most likely to get hurt. Home safety includes reducing the opportunity for falls, poisonings, burns, and other injuries in your home.

Young children can get into everyday things that can poison them and get into places in your home that can injure them. Older adults are more likely to be victims of falls, and the resulting injuries can affect their ability to lead an active and independent life.

Key Actions

- Replace window blinds that have looped chords, which may cause strangulation if not stored or set out of the reach of children. Replace with cordless blinds.
- Keep stairs and rails in good repair and ensure they are well lit.
- Install window guards or window stops on upper-floor windows to protect children.
- Keep firearms unloaded and locked to keep them away from children.
- Safe-proof your home by following the recommendations at this website: https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/DOC_25474.PDF
- Always keep matches, lighters, and candles out of children's reach.
- Make sure all medicines are stored safely away from children.
- Keep anything that can catch on fire away from fireplaces and all sources of heat.
- Keep your floors free of anything that may cause tripping.
- Store food and non-foods separately to prevent confusion and protect your family from container contamination and toxic spills.
- According to the Consumer Products Safety Commission, every year more than 22,000 children of 8 years and under, are killed or injured by "tip-overs". To prevent, be sure to secure furniture, such as bookcases, old televisions, entertainment centers, and dressers, to the wall or floor.
- See the Resources section in this booklet.

Another concern for some homes is asbestos. Asbestos fibers are dangerous if they get into the air and residents then breathe them. The fibers get into the air when materials containing asbestos are damaged or disturbed.



Always keep matches, lighters, and candles out of children's reach.



Keep your floors free of anything that may cause tripping.



Asbestos fibers are very light and easily carried through the air, they can be inhaled without a person realizing it.

Asbestos can cause serious long-term health problems including lung disease and cancer. Smokers have a higher risk from asbestos exposure due to lung damage from smoking. Other health hazards may include mesothelioma and asbestosis. These health hazards can take many years to develop.

Key Actions

- If you think your home has asbestos **do not** remove or damage the materials. Consult a licensed asbestos removal professional or state health office to learn more about options for reducing exposure.
- In areas with damaged asbestos, keep activities to a minimum and keep children out of those areas.



A summary of the information in this guide:

10 Ten Tips for a Healthy Home

- ➊ Get children under six tested for lead once a year. Call the National Lead Information Center to learn more (1-800-424-5323). (TTY 711).
- ➋ Never use a gas oven or cooktop to heat your home.
- ➌ Ask your doctor about a home checklist for asthma triggers.
- ➍ Open doors and/or windows to prevent mold from forming.
- ➎ Do not allow smoking in your car or home.
- ➏ Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- ➐ Get your home tested for radon. High levels can be dangerous.
- ➑ If your house uses wells for water, test your water every two years.
- ➒ Use mattress and pillowcase covers to protect from dust mites.
- ➓ While a space heater is in use, open a door from the room where the heater is located to the rest of the house and open a window slightly.

Special Concern:**Do You Have Elders in Your Home?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one in four older adults aged 65 years or older fall each year. Most of these falls occur in the home.

Key Actions

- Install grab bars in bathrooms and toilet. Use no-slip mats or no-slip tub stickers.
- Make sure there is adequate lighting throughout the house, unit, or building.
- Repair and secure loose railings and stair treads.
- Find temporary shelter for elderly or ill family members during extended periods of hot or cold indoor temperatures, if they are living in homes without adequate heating or cooling.

**Special Concern:****Do You Live in A Mobile Home?**

There are many options for housing, such as apartment rentals, single family homes, and townhouses. With each option, there are different ways in which the property is viewed. But what are the options for people wanting to own their own dwelling but cannot afford the cost and taxes of the land the dwelling sits on?

A manufactured, mobile, or trailer home is an option in this case. When you get into such a home, it will have been constructed in assembly line fashion and transported whole to the site. It is quite different than a traditional bottom-up built home. For instance, the floor will already have items attached and 'loaded' with such items as water/waste lines, heating ductwork and insulation. For energy efficiency, keep in mind that insulation may be fairly thin with voids of only a couple inches to fill in the walls.



When the floor is completed, it is fastened onto a steel frame for the foundation. You should make sure that the home is securely fastened to the foundation and anchored for strong wind conditions. With no basement or crawlspace storage, mobile homes can tend to get full of clutter - which brings about potential asthma triggers from dust as well as tripping hazards or homes for pests.

If you live in an area with heavy snowfall, there are some steps for winter care of your home. Remove snow regularly from the flat roof and inspect your walls for water marks that can occur in particularly rainy areas where the water can pool on the flat roof. You want to keep the dwelling dry, clean, and safe as with any other home.



Meth labs create significant environmental hazard and are very expensive (in thousands of dollars) to make safer.

Young children are particularly vulnerable when they crawl around the home. Meth labs create significant environmental hazard and are very expensive (in thousands of dollars) to make safer. Home buyers are often worried about buying a meth-contaminated house. Meth testing kits, from local health departments, are increasingly available to home buyers, renters, and many others.

Contact: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (Teletype 711).

Special Concern: **Coping with Substance Abuse in the Home**

Substance abuse in homes, including alcohol, methamphetamine (meth), and opioids, pose many serious dangers and can destroy lives. There is grave concern for the health of family members living in a contaminated home.

SUMMARY

This publication has provided you with lots of information about how to have a healthy home. Here is a simple way of tying things together:

The Path to a Healthy Home

1 Step 1: Learn About What a Healthy Home is

- Use this guide to ask questions about your home and how you live in it.
- Different steps are needed for the different areas and threats.
- It is up to you to make sure your home is a healthy home.

2 Step 2: Take Action - Get a Home Assessment

- Apply healthy homes principles to your household.
- Contact housing professionals.
- Create a simple maintenance plan along with housing professionals.
- One of the most important steps is keeping your home dry and well ventilated.

3 Step 3: Stay on Track

- Stick with a housekeeping plan.
- Always be looking for where improvements can be made in your home.



Room by Room Checklist for a Healthy Home

Take the first step! This checklist is a great way to start learning more about the conditions in your home that could be impacting your health and safety. You don't have to be an expert or a professional to complete this list. For more information on this material and recommended actions please visit: <https://www.hud.gov/healthyhomes> or download the Healthy Homes Basics App to have as a resource at your fingertips whenever you are ready.

1. Living, Dining, and Family Rooms

- If the home was built before 1978, check painted doors, windows, trim, and walls for lead.
- Vacuum carpets regularly to reduce asthma triggers.
- Replace corded blinds with un-corded (pole) blinds, or move window blind cords out of reach of children to prevent strangulation.
- Check lighting and extension cords for fraying or bare wires.
- Avoid having lighting and extension cords in floor pathways.
- Purchase children's toys that do not have small parts for choking and do not contain lead.
- Secure heavy items (televisions, bookcases) to walls to prevent tip overs.

2. Kitchen

- If the home was built before 1978, check painted doors, windows, trim, and walls for lead.
- Use a range hood exhausted to the outside (or open window) to ventilate while cooking.
- Clean up liquids and foods right after spills.
- Keep matches, glassware, knives, and cleaning supplies out of reach of children.
- Avoid leaving food and water out overnight.

- Mop floors at least weekly.
- Place Poison Control Hotline number (800) 222-1222 on the refrigerator and in every room (TTY 711).
- Do not allow children to be in kitchen unsupervised when the range or oven is on.

3. Bedroom(s)

- If the home was built before 1978, check painted doors, windows, trim, and walls for lead.
- Replace corded blinds with un-corded (pole) blinds, or move window blind cords out of reach of children to prevent strangulation.
- Make sure room has a working smoke detector.
- Make sure the hall outside of bedrooms has a working carbon monoxide detector.
- Use mattress and pillow covers, and vacuum carpets regularly to reduce asthma triggers.

4. Entry

- Use floor mats by entry doors to reduce bringing in lead dust and other toxins into the home.
- Remove shoes at entry if lead is present in the soil or paint.
- Repair or install weather seals around the perimeter of doors.

5. Bathrooms

- If the home was built before 1978, check painted doors, windows, trim, and walls for lead.
- Use an exhaust fan to ventilate after shower or bath use.
- Use slip resistant mats in showers and tubs.
- Clean up water from floors right after spills.
- Keep medicines and cleaning supplies locked away and out of reach of children.
- If an older adult or someone with mobility or balance concerns is present in the home, install grab bars at toilets, showers, and tubs.

6. Laundry

- Vent clothes dryer to the outside (through roof or wall, not into the attic).
- Keep laundry soaps and detergents out of reach of children.
- Wash sheets and blankets weekly to reduce asthma triggers.
- Regularly remove lint from dryer screen.

7. Attic

- Clean up clutter to prevent rodents and insects from finding places to nest.
- Check exposed attic insulation for asbestos and consult with an asbestos professional for removal.
- Make sure eave and roof vents are not blocked with insulation.

8. Basement (or Crawlspace)

- If the home was built before 1978, check painted doors, windows, trim, and walls for lead.

- Seal holes in walls and around windows and doors to keep rodents and pests out of living spaces.
- Clean up clutter to prevent rodents and insects from finding places to nest.
- Test the home for radon. If test shows radon above EPA action levels, seal slab and foundation wall cracks, and if the problem persists, consider installing a radon mitigation system.
- Keep pesticides and cleaning supplies locked away and out of reach of children.
- Seal all cracks in slabs and foundation walls for moisture, radon, and pest protection.

9. Garage

- Never run lawnmowers, cars, or combustion equipment inside the garage with garage door closed.
- Keep gasoline, pesticides, and cleaning supplies out of reach of children.
- Clean up oil, gasoline, and other spills immediately. Hardware stores sell products that can absorb the spill safely.
- If a floor drain is present, make sure it drains to well beyond the outside of the home.

10. Outside

- If the home was built before 1978, check painted doors, windows, trim, and walls for lead.
- If painted walls, doors, windows, or trim may contain lead, keep children away from peeling or damaged paint and prevent children from playing around the ground next to the walls.
- Remove leaves and debris from gutters regularly and extend downspouts to drain away from the house.

- ❑ Replace missing or broken shingles or flashings.
- ❑ Clean window wells of trash and debris.
- ❑ Install and maintain fences completely around pools with openings less than 1/4 inch.
- ❑ If the home was built before 1978, check hardboard siding for asbestos.
- ❑ Make sure private wells are sealed and capped.
- ❑ Consider testing well for pesticides, organic chemicals, and heavy metals before you use it for the first time.
- ❑ Test private water supplies annually for nitrate and coliform bacteria.
- ❑ Do not leave open garbage containers near the home.
- ❑ Repair broken glass in windows and doors.
- ❑ Seal holes in walls and around windows and doors to keep rodents and pests out of living spaces.
- ❑ Have a professional maintain yearly all gas appliances and check for carbon monoxide leaks and proper venting.
- ❑ Do not use candles or incense in the home when adult supervision is not present.
- ❑ Secure balcony and stair railings, and install no-slip nosings.
- ❑ Replace burned-out bulbs in lights over stairs and landings.
- ❑ Run a dehumidifier if indoor humidity is above 50 percent or there is condensation on windows.
- ❑ Make sure all gas burning appliances, furnaces, heaters, and fireplaces ventilate to the outside.
- ❑ Replace the furnace filter with a MERV 8 or higher every three months.
- ❑ If mold is visible in any room, a good guide to safe removal can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-cleanup-your-home>.
- ❑ Install child-proof locks on cabinets and child-proof covers on electrical outlets.

11. General

- ❑ If the home was built before 1978, use lead-safe work practices for all renovation and repairs and test children in the home for lead exposure.
- ❑ Check piping connecting the home to the water main and the piping in the home for lead (lead pipes are dull and can be scratched easily with a penny). Lead pipes are more likely to be found in homes built before 1986.
- ❑ No smoking inside the home, especially with children in the same home.
- ❑ Keep water temperature at less than 120 degrees.
- ❑ Keep firearms in locked safes.
- ❑ Use pest management recommendations or safer alternative products before applying pesticides.
- ❑ Keep all cleaning products in original containers and do not mix two products together.
- ❑ Keep all hazardous products and chemicals in locked cabinets away from children.

Important Resources

This is a selection of a wide range of organizations, websites, and educational materials, that expand upon this publication.

HUD/OLHCHH Hazard-Specific Factsheets:

- **Asbestos:** <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/substances/asbestos>
- **Asthma:** https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/asthma
- **Allergy:** https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/allergies
- **Home Safety:** https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/homesafety
- **Mold:** https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/mold
- **Lead:** https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/lead
- **Radon:** https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/radon
- **Carbon Monoxide:** https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/healthyhomes/carbonmonoxide.

Interactive Healthy Homes Apps

- **Healthy Homes Basics App** - This HUD/USDA product is for the general public (consumers). It introduces users, in simple terms, to healthy homes concepts. Content also covers many ways to have a healthy home. Download the app at <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/healthy-homes-basics/id1092367352>.
- **Healthy Homes Youth App** - This HUD/USDA product is for middle schoolers and helps them learn about healthy homes. Available at <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/healthy-homes-youth/id1434450117/?platform=iphone>.

- **Healthy Homes Do-It-Yourself Assessment Tool** - The Healthy Homes Do-It-Yourself Assessment Tool walks users through each room and provides simple, low, and no-cost solutions to many common healthy housing problems. <https://healthyhomes.fcgov.com/>.
- **Healthy Homes Partners App** - This HUD/USDA product is for stakeholders. It is non technical but goes beyond the above consumer version. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/healthy-homes-partners/id1244368357?mt=8>.

Key Hotlines

All the phone numbers below may also be reached by people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or who have speech disabilities, by teletype at 711.

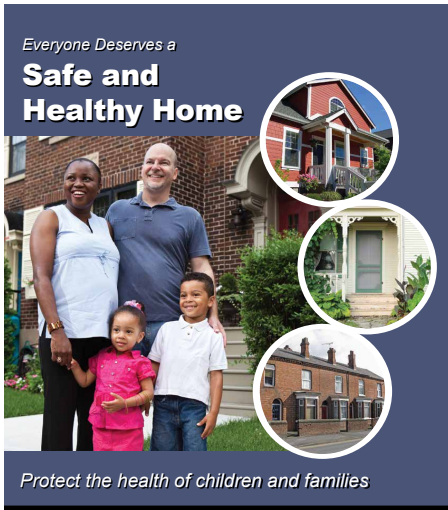
- **Poison Control Centers**, (800) 222-1222
- **HUD and EPA National Lead Information Center**, (800) 424-LEAD, (800) 424-5323
- **EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline**, (800) 426-4791
- **National Pesticide Information Center**, (800) 858-7378
- **FDA, Food Safety Information Service Hotline**, (888) SAFE-FOOD, (888) 723-33663
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cigarette smoking)** (800) QUIT-NOW, or (800) 7848-669
- **National Radon Information** (800) SOS-RADON, (800) 767-7236
- **Window Covering Safety Council**, (800) 506-4636
- **U.S. Substance and Mental Health Service Administration/ Substance Abuse National Helpline**, at (800) 662-HELP (4357)

General Safe and Healthy Homes Information Sources (for both the public and professionals)

- **Your local, state, or tribal health department**
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**, www.hud.gov
 - **Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes**, www.hud.gov/healthyhomes

- **Office of Native American Programs,**
www.hud.gov/codetalk
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture,**
www.nifa.usda.gov
- **Cooperative Extension Service for Healthy Homes Extension educators,**
<https://nifa.usda.gov/extension> or impact.extension.org
- **National Healthy Homes Partnership,**
extensionhealthyhomes.org/
- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,**
www.epa.gov
- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,**
www.cdc.gov, (800) 232-4636
- **U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission,**
www.cpsc.gov, (800) 638-2772
- **U.S. Department of Energy,**
www.energy.gov
- **National Center for Healthy Housing,**
www.nchh.org
- **Tribal Healthy Homes Network,**
<http://thhnw.org/>
- **Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals,**
<http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/Home/>
- **Children's Environmental Health Partnership,**
<https://cehn.org/>
- **National Safety Council,**
www.nsc.org
- **Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units,**
<https://www.pehsu.net/>
- **Indian Health Service,**
<https://www.ihs.gov/dehs/>
- **National Tribal Air Association**
<https://www.ntatribalair.org/indoor-air-quality/>

You may qualify for assistance with paying for healthy home related repairs by contacting your local HUD office for information on their Section 184 Indian Rural Development (RD), your local USDA office for information on their RD 504 Repair grants, or your local VA office for information on their Native Direct Loan program.



a consumer action guide www.hud.gov/healthyhomes



A stakeholder guide for protecting the health of children and families

Lead Radon Unsafe Drinking Water Home Safety
Mold and Moisture Carbon Monoxide Household Chemicals Home Comfort
Asthma and Allergies Indoor Environmental Quality Pests Asbestos



Healthy Homes Principles: The Healthy Homes Principles serve as a guide for addressing many of the topics discussed in this booklet. The **Everyone Deserves a Safe and Healthy Home** booklet summarizes the Healthy Homes Principles and has a room-by-room checklist:

- **Everyone Deserves a Safe and Healthy Home**, www.hud.gov/sites/documents/safeandhealthyhome.pdf.
 - For a quick but thorough overview of healthy homes, [Everyone Deserves a Safe and Healthy Home: A Consumer Action Guide](#) is a 12-page booklet written for the general public. It outlines the eight principles of healthy housing and provides a useful overview of key healthy homes issues, including lead-based paint, asthma and allergies, mold and moisture, radon, household chemicals, pests, carbon monoxide, home safety, asbestos, home temperature control, and indoor air quality.

For each issue, it provides critical action steps. It also includes a room-by-room checklist.

Lead Poisoning

- The [Protect Yourself from Lead in Your Home](#) pamphlet was created specifically to educate homebuyers and renters about lead-based paint and the protections provided by federal law. It is available in several languages, and it walks through the key things a homebuyer or renter must know about lead-based paint, the rules that protect consumers from lead-based paint, and the measures people can take to protect themselves from lead poisoning.

Project Director: Kitt Rodkey, MBA, HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, Washington, DC

Project Coordinator: Michael Goldschmidt, AIA, LEED AP, Director – USDA-NIFA Healthy Homes Partnership, University of Missouri

Acknowledgements

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, thanks the following individuals for their many valued comments and information used in the preparation of this publication:

National Tribal Air Association (NTAA) Indoor Air Quality Work Group:

- NTAA Chairman Wilfred J. Nabahe, Chairman, and All Members of the Indoor Air Quality Work Group
- Ernie Grooms, Group Lead and All Members of the NTAA Indoor Air Quality Work Group
- Andy Bessler, Project Director, NTAA, Institute for Tribal Health Professionals, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona

Project Team:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- Lou Witt, Program Analyst, Indoor Environments Division, Washington, DC
- Erin McTigue, Alaska Tribal Air Program and Tribal Indoor Air Program Coordinator, Region 10
- Priyanka Pathak, Air Toxics, Radiation, and Indoor Air Office, Region 9

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

- Kitt Rodkey, Senior Outreach Specialist, HUD Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes
- Dr. Peter Ashley, PhD, Director of Policy and Standards Division, HUD OLHCHH
- Iris Friday, Native American Program Specialist, HUD Northwest Office of Native American Programs, Seattle, WA
- Dr. Warren Friedman, PhD, CIH, Senior Advisor to the Director, HUD OLHCHH
- Karen Griego, Healthy Homes Representative, HUD OLHCHH
- Aaron J. Salkoski, HUD OLHCHH

Additional Contributors:

- Kristin Hill, Tribal Public and Environmental Health Think Tank
- Gillian Mittelstaedt, MPA, Executive Director, Tribal Healthy Homes Network, Issaquah, Washington
- Arthur Nash Jr., Energy Faculty and State Radon Outreach Coordinator, University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- Mansel A. Nelson, Senior Program Coordinator, Tribal Environmental Education, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ
- CAPT Stephen R. Piontkowski, MSEH, REHS, Senior Environmental Health Officer, Indian Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Native American Heritage Month

Every November, we celebrate Native American Heritage Month. The observance recognizes and honors the ancestry, cultures, traditions, history, and contributions of Native people. Tribal leaders are dedicated to building strong, healthy Native communities that support the educational aspirations of their youth and economic prosperity of their families.

HUD stands strong in our commitment to address pressing needs in Indian Country while upholding our government-to-government relationship. Our staff in the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, and Office of Native American Programs work tirelessly to support Indian Tribes' self-determination as they develop affordable housing, expand homeownership opportunities, and address critical infrastructure needs.

We hope that this publication will be useful to you.



Tribal Contacts:



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Funding for this guide is provided through an interagency agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH).

Project Coordination provided by Michael Goldschmidt,
University of Missouri and National Director – Healthy Homes Partnership

April 2020