## Seven Tips for Keeping a Healthy Home

1. **Keep it Dry**
   Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in your roof and windows. Check your interior plumbing and the 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. Check the recall list to make sure toys and other products are safe to use.

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.

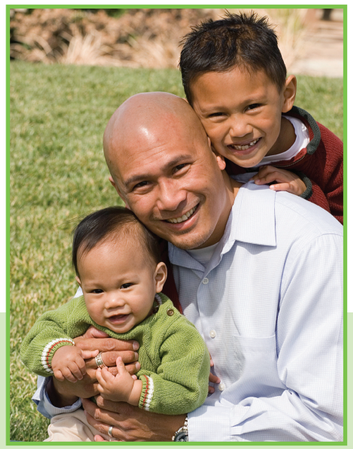
5. **Keep it Pest-free**
   All pests look for food, water, and shelter, so seal cracks and openings throughout the home and store food in pest-resistant containers. If needed, use sticky-traps and baits, and place them out of the reach of children.

6. **Keep it Toxic-free**
   Store pesticides and other chemicals in locked cabinets out of children's reach. Test your home for radon, a naturally occurring dangerous gas. 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.

**For more information on how to make your home a safer and healthier place, visit:**

**www.doh.wa.gov/healthyhomes**



Washington State Department of Health
DOH 300-010 September 2009

For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TYY 1-800-833-6388).

# A Healthy Home

**Simple steps to make your home a safer and healthier place.**

**Detailed information on all these topics can be found at: www.doh.wa.gov/healthyhomes**

## 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 improve indoor air quality in homes:

- **Avoid smoking in your home or car and never smoke near children.**
- **Store chemicals safely.** Store products like bleach, pesticides, paints, and paint thinners or other solvents in a cabinet secured with a lock. If possible, store them away from the home in a garage or shed.
- **Prevent dust from spreading.** Clean surfaces in your home with a wet mop or rag.
- **Replace older heating stoves** with a cleaner burning gas, pellet, or EPA certified wood stove.
- **Test for radon in your home.** Radon can seep into your house from the ground and may cause lung cancer. The only way to know if you have elevated levels of radon is to test.

## Asthma, Allergens, and Irritants

Asthma attacks can be triggered in the home by allergens or irritants such as dust mites, rodents, cockroaches, mold growth, second-hand smoke, excess dust, pesticides, and fragrances.

### To help reduce asthma and allergy symptoms:

- **Maintain good indoor air quality.** Keep your home well ventilated, free of pollutants such as tobacco smoke, pesticides, and allergens. Consider purchasing a HEPA filter if someone in your home has asthma.
- **Wash your bedding in hot water**, greater than 130F, every week to kill dust mites.
- **Eliminate cockroaches and pests.** Use gel baits and seal cracks. Thoroughly clean your home to eliminate roach dust and to minimize pest activity. Avoid using bug bombs.
- **Prevent mold growth.** Mold can grow in places where excess moisture or water damage has occurred. Repair water leaks immediately, replace water damaged materials, and vent exhaust fans to the outdoors.
- **Do not use fragrances.** Fragrances such as perfumes, colognes, and air fresheners can trigger asthma attacks.

## Home Safety and Unintentional Injuries

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

### To help increase home safety:

- **Install and routinely test smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms.** Maintain and service your gas and oil appliances. Never use the kitchen 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 or property.** If children are present, install safety latches on all cabinets and drawers that contain harmful products. Keep cleaning supplies and medicines in locked cabinets out of children's reach.
- **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 a young child alone in the bathtub. Watch children at all times around pools and hot tubs.

## Product Safety

Chemicals found in common household products can be harmful to children and pets. Store harmful products safely, use less of them in and around your home, and properly dispose of products you don't need.

### To use products more safely:

- **Use safer cleaning products and methods.** Read and follow the instructions on the label. Avoid products labeled "Danger" or "Poison."
- **Reduce the use of pesticides around your home.** Find out about other ways to control pests without the use of pesticides.
- **Check for recalled products in your home.** Children's products that are unsafe are recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Check product recalls at **www.cpsc.gov**.
- **Dispose of unwanted household hazardous waste properly.** Contact your local solid waste utility to learn more about safe disposal.

## Lead Hazards

Homes built before 1978 may have been painted with lead-based paint. As painted surfaces age, 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.
- **Always use lead-safe work practices** when renovating or doing home repairs on paint that may contain lead.
- **Prevent dust from spreading.** Clean 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.
- **Clean or remove shoes before entering the home** to avoid tracking in soil that may contain lead.
- **Have your doctor test your child for lead poisoning.** A blood lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning.

## Food and Drinking Water Safety

Despite the fact that America's food and water supplies are among the safest in the world, sometimes foodborne or waterborne bacteria and other contaminants can make you and those you care about sick.

### To help reduce illnesses:

- **Practice simple precautions to help prevent food poisoning.** Always wash hands before you begin to prepare food and after handling raw meats. Wash all produce, especially if it is to be eaten raw. Cook meats thoroughly, keep cold foods cold, keep hot foods hot, and refrigerate leftovers immediately.
- **Test your well water.** It is recommended that private wells be tested for coliform once a year and nitrate once every three years.
- **Eat fish as part of a healthy diet**, but choose fish that are low in mercury, like salmon, cod, flounder, trout, and canned light tuna.

Washington State Department of Health

**Dear Colleague**,

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) provides print-ready files (PDFs) of health education materials. To ensure that the original quality of the piece is maintained, please read and follow the instructions below and the specifications included for professional printing.

- **Use the latest version**. DOH materials are developed using the most current information available, are checked for clinical accuracy, and are field tested with the intended audience to ensure they are clear and readable. DOH programs make periodic revisions to educational materials, so please check this web site to be sure you have the latest version. DOH assumes no responsibility for the use of this material or for any errors or omissions.

- **Do not alter**. We are providing this artwork with the understanding that it will be printed without alterations and copies will be free to the public. Do not edit the text or use illustrations or photographs for other purposes without first contacting us. Please do not alter or remove the DOH logo, publication number or revision date. If you want to use a part of this publication for other purposes, contact the Office of Health Promotion first.

- **For quality reproduction**: Low resolution PDF files are intended for black and white or color desktop printers. They work best if you are making only one or two copies. High resolution PDF files are intended for reproducing large quantities and are set up for use by professional offset print shops. The high resolution files also include detailed printing specifications. Please match them as closely as possible and insist on the best possible quality for all reproductions.

If you have questions, contact:
Office of Health Promotion
P.O. Box 47833 Olympia, WA 98504-7833
(360) 236-3736

**Sincerely**,
**Health Education Resource Exchange Web Team**

# PRINTING SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title:** | **Healthy Homes** (brochure) |
| **Size:** | 9 x 17 |
| **Paper:** | 80# matte coated text, white |
| **Ink color:** | 4-color process |
| **Special instructions:** | 2-sided printing. Finished job folds to 5.75 x 9 |
| **DOH Pub #:** | 300-010 |