



A healthy home is clean

A clean home reduces pests, dangerous chemicals, and asthma triggers.

The main idea

Some dirt—like pollen and soil—can get into your home from the outdoors. Other dirt—like dust, garbage, cigarette butts, and pest droppings—can come from inside your home. A dirty or cluttered home encourages pests and mold. Dirt may also contain dangerous chemicals, such as lead from old paint and other chemicals from many household products.

How it affects your health

A dirty home

- May trigger asthma attacks and set off allergy symptoms
- May increase the risk for breathing problems, like asthma, coughing, and shortness of breath
- May increase exposure to dangerous chemicals—like lead and household cleaners—which cause poisoning and many other health problems

How to know if you have a problem

- Dirt or dust on floors, windows, furniture, counters, or curtains
- Grease or dirt on the stove or counters
- Old food or food wrappings lying around
- Garbage cans not covered
- Pests—like cockroaches or mice—or their droppings or urine
- Clutter on floors, furniture, or counters

How to fix the problem

- Clear away clutter: pick up things that do not belong on the floor, countertops, and furniture, and store them where they do belong
- Use safer cleaning and household products, and clean often
- Use a damp mop and damp dust cloth to clean
- Vacuum carefully and often: if possible, use a vacuum that has a HEPA filter, which picks up very small particles of dirt
- Wash bedding once a week, and use hot water to kill dust mites
- Leave your shoes at the door to keep dirt out of your home
- Put doormats at each door to trap dirt
- Keep pets off beds and out of the bedroom
- If possible, replace materials that are more difficult to clean (like carpets) with materials that are easier to clean (like wood or linoleum floors)

How to learn more

National Center for Healthy Housing, “Dust”: <http://www.nchh.org/What-We-Do/Health-Hazards--Prevention--and-Solutions/Dust.aspx>

For more information, call the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s Healthy Homes Initiative at 860-509-7299, see www.ct.gov/dph/healthyhomes, or call Infoline at 2-1-1