

Susie and Jerome

Learn about a Healthy Home

Parent/guardian/teacher guide *and*
activity book



This book was developed by the
Healthy Environments for Children Initiative
Cooperative Extension System, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Connecticut

Funding for this project was provided by the
Connecticut Department of Public Health

Parent/guardian/teacher guide

Susie and Jerome Learn about a Healthy Home teaches young children about healthy homes. It explains the features of a healthy home and teaches children simple steps they can take to help make and keep their homes and themselves healthy.

A healthy home is especially important to families with children. An unhealthy home can seriously affect not only children's health but also their ability to learn and succeed in school. Healthy children miss less school and generally learn better.

For example, in an unhealthy home

- Lead from old paint (in homes built before 1978) can poison a child, damaging his ability to learn and behave.
- Mold, pests, or tobacco smoke can trigger asthma attacks, which can increase school absences.
- Smoking can cause fires.
- Clutter can cause falls.
- Improperly stored cleaning supplies, pesticides, and other chemicals can poison a child.

What is a healthy home?

A healthy home is one that supports the health and safety of the people who live in it. It has seven main features:

Clean	to reduce pests, dangerous chemicals, and asthma triggers
Dry	to reduce pests and mold
Safe	to reduce accidents and injuries
Well ventilated	to provide fresh air, which makes breathing healthier
Free of pests	to prevent diseases and reduce asthma triggers
Free of dangerous chemicals	to reduce poisonings, injuries, and other harmful effects
In good repair	to keep small problems from becoming big problems

What can adults do?

Adults can take some simple steps to make and keep their homes healthy.

Clean	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean up clutter, where pests and mold can live• Use a damp mop and damp dust cloth to clean, and vacuum carefully and often• Wash bedding once a week, using hot water to kill dust mites• Leave your shoes at the door to keep dirt out of your home
Dry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regularly check for leaks, inside and outside, and repair them right away• Clean up water spills right away

Susie and Jerome Learn about a Healthy Home

Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear away things that might make someone slip, trip, or fall• Use the safest possible household products• Store household products and medicines where children cannot reach them• Make sure that you have a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm
Well ventilated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open windows whenever possible• Use fans in bathrooms and kitchens
Free of pests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove food, water, and places where pests can live• Store food in strong, covered containers• Take out trash every day
Free of dangerous chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not allow smoking in your home• Read product labels carefully, and follow their safety directions• If your home was built before 1978, learn about lead paint dangers• Test for radon, a gas that causes cancer
In good repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inspect your home regularly• Seal cracks, holes, and other openings in your home

For more information, see the fact sheets at the end of this guide.

Where can you learn more about healthy homes?

- National Center for Healthy Housing, www.nchh.org
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/healthyhomes
- Healthy Homes Partnership, www.uwex.edu/healthyhome
- Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, www.greenandhealthyhomes.org

How can you use this book?

This book explains the seven features of a healthy home. It suggests some simple ways that children can apply these ideas. You can help your child understand the ideas by

1. Reading the book aloud to your child
2. Explaining anything that your child may not understand
3. Asking your child how the pictures illustrate the ideas on each set of pages
4. Asking your child the questions at the bottom of each set of pages, and discussing your child's answers
5. Encouraging your child to think of additional ways to apply these ideas
6. Thinking about ways that you, as an adult, can apply the ideas for a healthy home, and talking with your child about them

Additional activities after your child has read this book

The following pages have activities that adults can do with children to build on the ideas in the book. You may read the activities to your child or encourage your child to read and respond to them. Depending on your child's age and ability, he or she may respond by

- Saying the answers to questions
- Writing the answers to questions
- Drawing a picture
- Acting out an answer (for example, if an answer is *yes*, stand up, and if an answer is *no*, sit *down*)

Activity book

Introduction

What kind of girl is Susie? Use your own words to describe her below:

Does Susie sound like someone you would like to have as a friend? _____

Why or why not? _____

Jerome tried to write the rules for a healthy home, but he made some mistakes. Can you fix Jerome's mistakes below?

1. A healthy home is dirty.
2. A healthy home is damp.
3. A healthy home is sometimes safe.
4. A healthy home has stuffy air.
5. A healthy home has lots of friendly bugs and mice and rats.
6. A healthy home has lots of dangerous chemicals, like cigarette smoke and old paint.
7. A healthy home is in bad repair.

The correct answers are upside down in the box below.

1. A healthy home is **dirty clean**.

2. A healthy home is **damp dry**.

3. A healthy home is **sometimes safe**.

4. A healthy home has **stuffy fresh air**.

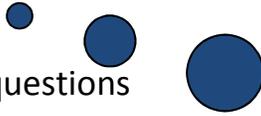
5. A healthy home has **lots of friendly bugs and mice and rats no pests**.

6. A healthy home has **lots of no dangerous chemicals, like cigarette smoke and old paint**.

7. A healthy home is in **bad good** repair.

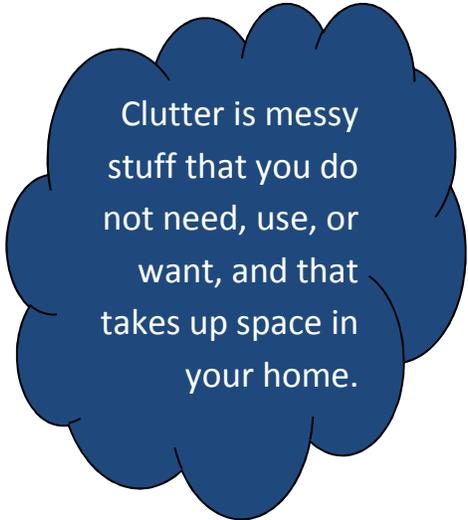
A healthy home is clean.

Do you know what clutter is?



Do you have clutter? Read the questions below aloud and then answer them:

- Is a cookie *cutter* in your *clutter*? _____
- Is there *butter* in your *clutter*? _____
- Should you *mutter* to your *clutter*? _____
- Can birds *flutter* on your *clutter*? _____
- Is your *clutter* in the *gutter*? _____
- Can you *utter* “*clutter, clutter*” while you clean your messy *gutter*? _____
- Does your bread and *butter sputter* cause it’s lost among your *clutter*? _____



What can you clean today? Read the questions below aloud and then answer them:

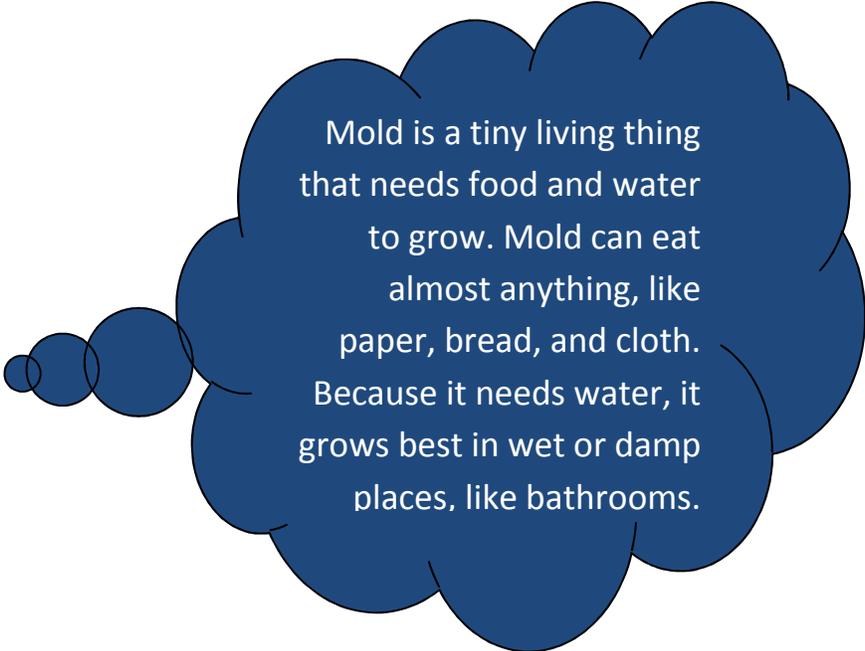
- Can you *clean* a big *green bean*? _____
- Can you *clean* a *lean, mean queen*? _____
- Can you *clean* a time *machine*? _____
- Can you *clean* a TV *screen*? _____
- Can you *clean* a *jellybean*? _____
- Can you *clean* what you have *seen*? _____
- Can you *clean* a *teen’s blue jeans*? _____

Can you think of other things you can clean? If so, tell them to a grownup or write them below.

A healthy home is dry.

A home for people should be dry, to keep out *pests* (like bugs and mice) and to keep *mold* from growing.

Do you know what *mold* is?



Mold is a tiny living thing that needs food and water to grow. Mold can eat almost anything, like paper, bread, and cloth. Because it needs water, it grows best in wet or damp places, like bathrooms.

Do you think that Jerome's home should be wet or dry? Why?

Below, you can draw a picture of a nice home for Jerome.

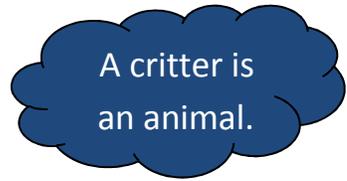


A healthy home is safe.

Susie wants to keep her home safe for a *critter* who charms her.

Do you know what a *critter* is?

Who is the critter that Susie wants to keep safe?



What kind of critter is Jerome?

<input type="checkbox"/> An old fish?	<input type="checkbox"/> A gold dog?	<input type="checkbox"/> A cold fish?
<input type="checkbox"/> An old mouse?	<input type="checkbox"/> A goldfish?	<input type="checkbox"/> A bold cat?

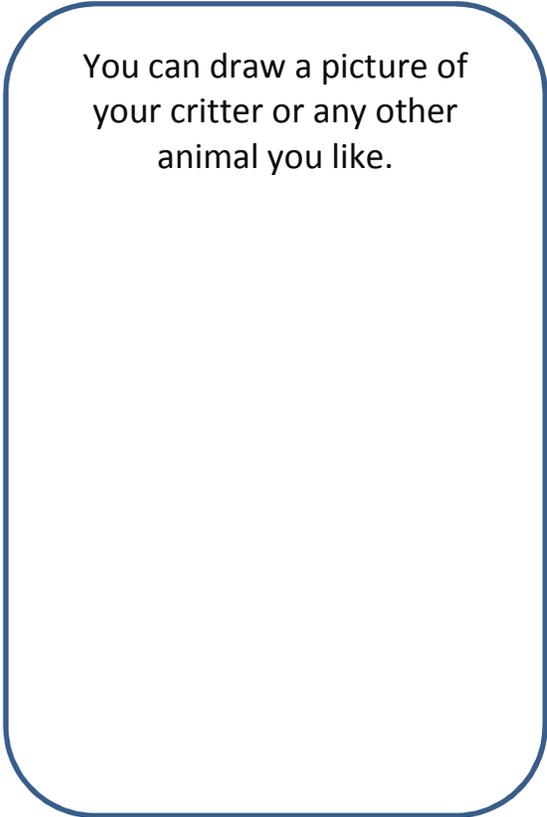
The correct answer is on the right, upside down.

Jerome is a goldfish.

Do you have a critter (a pet) that you want to keep safe? If you do, you can write its name here: _____

If you do not have a pet, you can write the name of any animal that you want to keep safe: _____

What do you like best about your pet or the animal that you want to keep safe? You can write your answer here.



A healthy home has fresh air.

Why does Susie's home need fresh air? Pick the best answer below.

- To help Jerome breathe easier
- To help Susie breathe easier
- To help Susie do her homework
- To help Jerome do his homework

The correct answer is on the right, upside down.

To help Susie breathe easier

What are some things that bring fresh air into a house? Pick all the right answers below.

- Open windows
- Shoes
- Fans
- Hamburgers

The correct answers are on the right, upside down.

Open windows
Fans

How does Jerome feel about fresh air? Pick the best answer below.

- It makes him feel cuddly.
- It makes him feel wobbly.
- It makes him want broccoli.
- It makes him want to clean his bowl.

The correct answer is on the right, upside down.

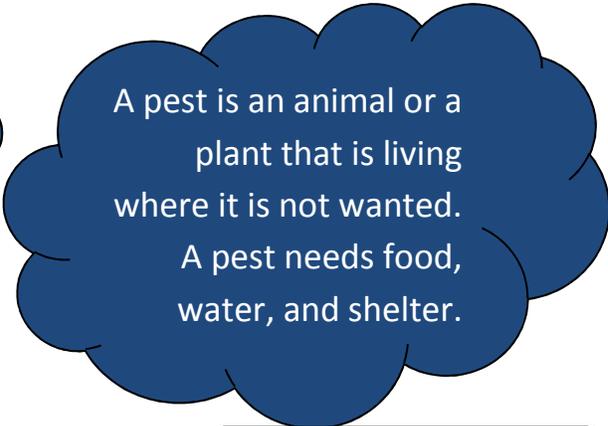
It makes him feel wobbly, because Jerome is a fish, and a fish cannot breathe air.

A healthy home doesn't have pests.

What's a pest?

Which things in the list below are pests in a house?

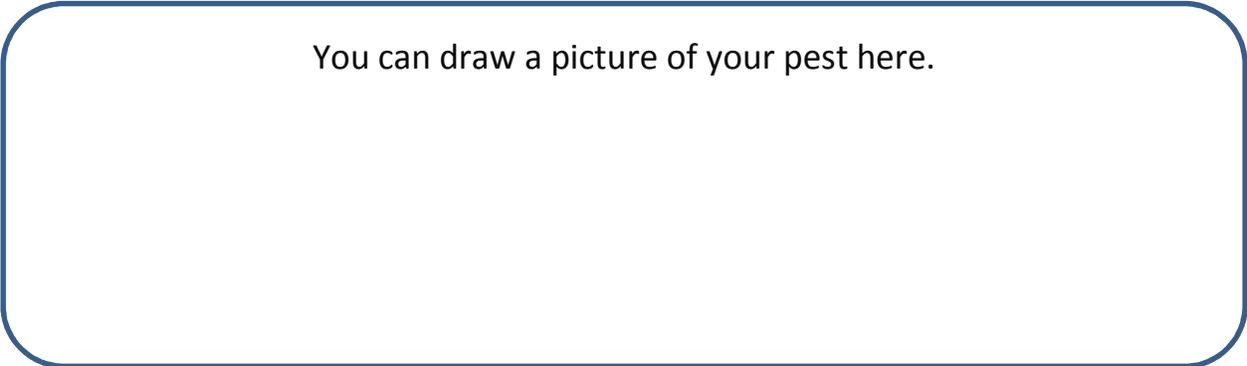
- A tennis ball
- A mouse
- An ant
- Your homework



The correct answers are on the right, upside down.

You can invent your own pest.

What is your pest's name?	
Where does it live?	
What does it eat?	
What color is it?	
How big is it?	
How many legs does it have?	
How many eyes does it have?	
Is it furry, feathery, or smooth?	
How can you keep this pest out of your house? (Pick one of the answers on the right.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep it from getting inside <input type="checkbox"/> Take away its food, water, and shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Find an animal that eats it <input type="checkbox"/> Capture it in a trap <input type="checkbox"/> Stomp or swat it



You can draw a picture of your pest here.

A healthy home doesn't have dangerous chemicals.

Smoke from cigarettes, cigars, and pipes is unhealthy for the people who smoke and the people around them.

Use the space below to make your own "No smoking" sign. You can draw a picture or write more words, or both.

Please don't smoke around me.

Your name

A healthy home is in good repair.

A healthy home doesn't have dripping pipes, paint chips or paint dust, and broken things.

Here's a song you can sing to remind you to tell a grownup right away if you see anything that needs to be fixed. The song goes to the tune of "If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands." You can think up more verses if you like.

If you see a faucet dripping, tell a grownup.
If you see a faucet dripping, tell a grownup.
If you see a faucet dripping, water's spitting, don't stay sitting.
If you see a faucet dripping, tell a grownup.

If you see a mouse or bug, tell a grownup.
If you see a mouse or bug, tell a grownup.
If you see a mouse or bug, then don't shrug like a smug slug.
If you see a mouse or bug, tell a grownup.

If you see paint chips on the floor, tell a grownup.
If you see paint chips on the floor, tell a grownup.
If you see paint chips on the floor, then don't wait till there are more.
If you see paint chips on the floor, tell a grownup.

If you see holes upon a wall, tell a grownup.
If you see holes upon a wall, tell a grownup.
If you see holes upon a wall, do not bawl and do not stall.
If you see holes upon a wall, tell a grownup.

If you see some broken glass, tell a grownup.
If you see some broken glass, tell a grownup.
If you see some broken glass, then don't wait for time to pass.
If you see some broken glass, tell a grownup.

Fact sheets for adults



What is a healthy home?

A healthy home supports the health and safety of the people who live there.

To make your home healthy, keep it

Clean

to reduce pests, dangerous chemicals, and asthma triggers

- Clean up clutter, where pests and mold can live
- Use a damp mop and damp dust cloth to clean, and vacuum carefully and often
- Wash bedding once a week, using hot water to kill dust mites
- Leave your shoes at the door to keep dirt out of your home

Dry

to reduce pests and mold

- Regularly check for leaks, inside and outside, and repair them right away
- Clean up water spills right away

Safe

to reduce accidents and injuries

- Clear away things that might make you slip, trip, or fall
- Use the safest possible household products
- Store household products and medicines where children cannot reach them
- Make sure that you have a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm

Well ventilated

to provide fresh air

- Open windows whenever possible
- Use fans in bathrooms and kitchens

Free of pests

to prevent diseases and reduce asthma triggers

- Remove food, water, and places where pests can live
- Store food in strong, covered containers
- Take out trash every day

Free of dangerous chemicals

to reduce poisonings, injuries, and other harmful effects

- Do not allow smoking in your home
- Read product labels carefully, and follow their safety directions
- If your home was built before 1978, learn about lead paint dangers
- Test for radon, a gas that causes cancer

In good repair

to keep small problems from becoming big problems

- Inspect your home regularly
- Seal cracks, holes, and other openings in your home

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





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



A healthy home is dry

A dry home reduces mold and pests.



The main idea

A home with too much moisture encourages mold and pests to live and grow. Both mold and pests can damage your belongings and cause various health problems.

How it affects your health

Mold may make breathing problems worse, especially for people with asthma, allergies to mold, and respiratory illnesses (such as lung infections). Pests can carry diseases and trigger asthma attacks.

How to know if you have a problem

- Leaking or dripping pipes; water droplets (condensation) on cold windows
- Water stains or damage; warping or rotting wood; peeling, blistering, or cracking paint
- Clogged gutters, plugged downspouts, or cracks in the foundation
- Mold that you see (often as speckled patches, in any color) or smell (musty or earthy), especially in
 - Bathrooms (under sinks or around pipes, and on walls, ceilings, or shower curtains) and kitchens (under sinks or around pipes, under a refrigerator, and in cabinets)
 - Damp basements, closets, and laundry areas
 - Areas where there have been leaks or water damage

How to fix the problem

- Find the sources of moisture, such as leaks inside and outside the home, and repair them
- Clean up water and other spills right away
- Use exhaust fans or open windows in the bathroom after showering or bathing and in the kitchen when cooking
- Clean downspouts and gutters, and make sure that water drains away from the home
- If you see or smell mold, it should be cleaned up promptly
 - It is usually not necessary to test to learn whether you have mold or to learn the type of mold
 - Consider hiring a trained professional if the moldy area is large, if the damage was caused by contaminated water, if the mold is hidden in walls or ceilings, or if you have asthma, severe allergies to mold, or a weak immune system
 - Clean up small moldy areas by scrubbing away mold on hard surfaces with soap and water (bleach is not necessary)
- Throw out soaked materials, such as carpets, that have been wet for more than 24-48 hours

How to learn more

- Connecticut Department of Public Health, "Mold in the Home: Health Concerns," www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/mold_in_the_home_5-10.pdf
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home*: www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html
- Oregon State University Extension Service, "Home Moisture Problems," <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/ec/ec1437.pdf>

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





A healthy home is safe

A safe home reduces accidents and injuries.



The main idea

Many accidental injuries occur in the home. Common causes are falls, fires, drowning, choking, and poisonings. Young children and older adults are often the most likely to be injured.

How it affects your health

Accidental injuries can result in hospitalizations, surgeries, and long-term disabilities. They are among the leading causes of death in the home.

How to know if you have a problem

- Clutter—such as clothing, shoes, papers, and toys—creates dangers for slips, trips, and falls
- Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors (at least one of each device for each floor of the home) are either not present or not working
- Poor or no lighting in stairways, doorways, and walkways
- Hot water from the faucet is very hot
- Dangerous items—such as medicines and vitamins, household cleaning products, matches and lighters, and sharp tools—are stored where children can reach them
- Damaged electrical cords are present

How to fix the problem in the home

- Clear away things—like clutter, loose electrical cords, slippery throw rugs, and spilled food—that might make you slip, trip, or fall
- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor, put in fresh batteries every autumn and spring, and check that the devices are working properly
- Put fire extinguishers in key places, such as the kitchen, bedroom, and basement; replace or recharge when needed
- Add or fix lighting in stairways, doorways, and walkways
- Replace damaged electrical cords
- Set hot water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit or lower to prevent burns
- Post the phone number for the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) next to every phone, and program cell phones with that number
- If children live in or visit your home, supervise them at all times, and childproof your home:
 - Store all dangerous items out of reach of children
 - Always use safety devices, such as baby gates, child-proof containers, and safety latches on doors, windows, and cabinets
- Do a thorough home safety check

How to learn more

- For a detailed home safety checklist, see Safe Kids USA: <http://www.safekids.org>
- Connecticut Poison Control Center, <http://poisoncontrol.uchc.edu/>

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





A healthy home is well ventilated

A well-ventilated home provides fresh air.



The main idea

Most people spend most of their time indoors. But indoor air often contains unhealthy chemicals from household products (such as cleaning supplies), furnaces, and other devices. Bringing fresh air into the home helps to remove or dilute these chemicals and makes breathing healthier.

How it affects your health

Chemicals from household products may have various health effects. In a home that is poorly ventilated, poor air quality may

- Make allergy or asthma symptoms worse
- Make your eyes red, and make your nose and throat burn
- Make you feel tired and give you headaches often
- Allow mold to grow because of too much moisture

How to know if you have a problem

- You see or smell mold, fumes, smoke, or strong or unpleasant smells
- Surfaces are very dusty
- Heating and air conditioner filters and vents are dirty or clogged with dust
- Clothes dryer is not vented to outside
- Exhaust fans in bathrooms or kitchen are missing, not working, or not vented to outside

How to fix the problem

- Do not allow smoking in the home
- Open windows whenever possible
- In bathrooms and kitchens, use exhaust fans that are vented outside
- Do not use aerosol sprays, scented candles, and air fresheners
- Choose household products—like safer paints, adhesives, and wood items—that do not give off dangerous gases
- Clean heating and air conditioner vents, and replace filters regularly
- Vent all appliances that burn fuel to the outside
- Have furnace, hot water heater, gas appliances, and fireplace or woodstove checked every year by qualified professionals
- Test for radon, a natural gas that causes lung cancer, and if needed, install systems to reduce radon
- Consider indoor air quality if you make your home more energy efficient

How to learn more

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Homeowner's Guide to Ventilation*, http://www.nchh.org/Portals/0/Contents/Homeowners_Guide_to_Ventilation.pdf
- U.S. Department of Energy, *Guide to Home Ventilation*, http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/openhouse/pdfs/ventilation_factsheet16.pdf

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A healthy home is free of pests



A pest-free home prevents diseases and reduces asthma triggers.

The main idea

A pest is any animal that is somewhere it is not wanted. Many people react to the first signs of a pest problem by applying strong pesticides. But using pesticides may cause problems that are worse than the harm caused by the pests themselves. Pests should be controlled safely.

How it affects your health

Pests (such as rats, mice, cockroaches, mosquitoes, ticks, and bedbugs)

- May trigger asthma attacks in some people
- Some pests—such as deer ticks, fleas, cockroaches, and rats—carry diseases
- Although bedbugs do not carry diseases, their bites may itch and irritate the skin

Pesticides (chemicals designed to kill pests)

- May trigger asthma attacks, other breathing problems, nausea, and headaches in some people
- May have long-term effects, such as birth defects, learning disabilities, and cancer

How to know if you have a problem

- Seeing or hearing the pest itself—dead or alive—often in damp areas (like bathrooms and basements), wherever food is stored, and at night
- Droppings, hair, or nests
- Damage from gnawing on walls, wires, food, food packages, or newspapers
- Tracks (areas where pests frequently run, usually along walls, where there is no dust or dirt)
- Rows of red bite marks on the skin from bedbugs

How to fix the problem

Use integrated pest management (IPM) methods to control pests safely

- Remove food, water, and places where pests can live
 - Repair moisture problems, such as leaks
 - Store food in strong, covered containers, and keep dining and kitchen areas clean and dry
 - Take out trash every day
 - Clear away clutter where pests can live
 - Vacuum well and often
 - Seal cracks and openings in floors or walls, using copper mesh, brass wool, or silicone caulk
- Use the least harmful solution to solve pest problems, such as sticky traps or boric acid
- Use pesticides only when other methods fail: follow directions very carefully and store pesticides where children cannot reach them

How to learn more

- Stop Pests in Housing, www.stoppests.org
- National Center for Healthy Housing, www.healthyhomestraining.org/ipm
- New Hampshire Bed Bug Action Committee, www.nhbedbugs.com/bed-bug-resources.php

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





A healthy home is free of dangerous chemicals



A home that is free of dangerous chemicals reduces poisonings, injuries, and other harmful effects.

The main idea

Many commonly used household products (including air fresheners, bleach, carpet shampoos, drain cleaners, furniture polish, and laundry and dishwasher detergents) contain chemicals that may be harmful. Use safer alternatives whenever possible. Other dangerous chemicals include radon (a natural gas that is radioactive), lead paint, and smoke from cigarettes, cigars, and pipes.

How it affects your health

If you breathe, swallow, or touch them, various chemicals may

- Cause dizziness, headaches, fatigue, depression, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Irritate the eyes, skin, and lungs
- Burn the skin
- Damage the liver, lungs, kidneys, and nervous system
- Cause cancer in various parts of the body
- Lead to convulsions, coma, and death

How to know if you have a problem

- Your household products contain strong fragrances and harsh chemicals, with labels that say *Caution*, *Warning*, *Danger*, or *Poison* (*Danger* and *Poison* are the most dangerous)
- Smoking in and around your home
- Peeling, flaking, or chalking paint in a home built before 1978 that may contain lead

How to fix the problem

- Use the safest possible household products, including homemade “green” products with ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, liquid castile soap, and salt
- Read product warning labels carefully, and follow directions for use, storage, and disposal
- Keep chemicals in their original containers, and never remove labels
- Keep dangerous household chemicals out of children’s reach
- Do not use air fresheners, other products with fragrances, or aerosol sprays
- Post the phone number for the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222) near every phone, and program the number into cell phones
- Do not allow smoking in or around your home
- If your home was built before 1978, have it tested for lead paint
- Test for radon, and install systems to remove it if necessary

How to learn more

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Household Products Database, <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm>
- Connecticut Poison Control Center, http://poisoncontrol.uchc.edu/about_poisons/index.html
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/wastes/conserves/materials/pubs/hhw-safe.htm

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





A healthy home is in good repair



A home that is kept in good repair keeps small problems from becoming big problems.

The main idea

Homes that are kept in good repair are less likely to have moisture, pest, and safety problems. By checking your home regularly, and maintaining or repairing it when needed, you can take care of small problems before they become big problems.

How it affects your health

A home in poor repair

- Increases the risk of injuries from accidents
- Is more likely to contain things that can cause asthma attacks, allergy symptoms, and other health problems
- If built before 1978, may contain lead paint, increasing the risk of lead poisoning
Lead poisoning harms children (damaging their ability to learn, think, and behave) and adults (raising their blood pressure and making them tired or irritable)

How to know if you have a problem

- Moisture or mold, especially in the basement, bathroom, ceiling, or attic
- Leaks, especially from the roof, around windows or doors, and around pipes
- Missing or broken lights or windows
- Missing or broken stair railings or steps
- Worn or damaged electrical wires or cords
- Paint dust or peeling, flaking, or chalking paint, especially in a home built before 1978

How to fix the problem

Check your home often: maintain good conditions and repair problems as necessary

- Clean dryer vents, kitchen fans, and bathroom fans often
- Repair or replace broken windows, doors, railings, stairs, gutters, downspouts, and cracks or holes in foundations
- Fix leaks promptly
- Hire qualified professionals when necessary, such as for plumbing, electrical, and roof repairs
- In homes built before 1978, hire contractors who are certified in lead-safe work practices by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or learn how to work safely around lead paint

How to learn more

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Healthy Homes Maintenance Checklist, http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_12334.pdf
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, A Healthy Home for Everyone, http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/publications/Final_Companion_Piece.pdf

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

