

# Thank you

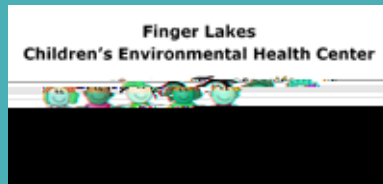
Causewave Community Partners

City of Rochester

Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center

Common Ground Health

University of Rochester Environmental Health Sciences Center



Finger Lakes Children's Environmental Health Center  
[www.golisano.urmc.edu/FLCEHC](http://www.golisano.urmc.edu/FLCEHC)  
585-275-3638 or 1-844-FLCEHC-0 (1-844-352-3420)  
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# Healthy Homes, Healthy Families

A GUIDE TO PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH  
BY MAKING YOUR HOME A SAFER ENVIRONMENT



New York State 2020 Edition



# Healthy Homes, Healthy Families

## FOLLOW THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTHY HOUSING'S SEVEN STEPS FOR CREATING A HEALTHIER HOME. KEEP IT:

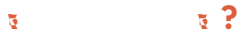


Environmental health hazards include physical hazards or toxins that may enter our bodies through air, food or water. Some environmental health hazards can make you sick right away; others show no signs for many years, so it is important to understand and avoid them now.



Environmental hazards usually have the biggest impact on children because it affects their developing bodies while in the womb and after birth, not to mention that their hand-to-mouth behavior, size, and activities such as crawling subject them to additional hazards. Early life exposure to environmental contaminants can lead to many health problems later in life, including neurological problems, obesity, heart disease and cancer.

Environmental hazards can also be passed from a mother's body to her unborn baby or to the baby through breast milk. This means women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should also avoid exposure to environmental hazards.



Americans, especially children, spend most of their time indoors. Environmental health hazards in homes can have major effects on families' health, like asthma, lead poisoning or even cancer.



This booklet describes some common home environmental health hazards and suggests simple ways to reduce these hazards in your home. Resources for more information are found throughout the booklet. Refer to page 27 for national and state resources.



Improving home environmental health requires a combination of physical and behavioral changes. Collaboration among residents, property owners and local organizations to address home hazards are essential for protecting the health of children and families. Throughout this guide, we offer tips for residents and property owners, as well as resources for addressing larger problems.

- Use vent fans or open a window while showering and cooking.
- Find and fix water leaks right away.



Practice the healthy housekeeping tips mentioned throughout this guide.



# Asthma accounts for more than 14 million missed school days every year.


—American Lung Association




## Asthma Triggers in the Home

Asthma is chronic, meaning it cannot be cured. When you have asthma, the air passages in your lungs are very sensitive and can easily become inflamed and swollen. Different irritants, or “triggers,” cause asthma attacks in different people.

During an asthma attack the bronchial tubes (airways) become inflamed and irritated, fill with mucus and the muscles constrict. Symptoms of an asthma attack include coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and difficulty breathing. Untreated asthma can lead to hospitalization or death.

- 
- Tobacco smoke
  - Dust mites
  - Mold
  - Pets
  - Pests
  - Strong fragrances

- 
- Go to the doctor for asthma follow-up visits at least every six months.
  - Make sure your bedroom is asthma safe:
    - Lightly spray area with water before dusting or sweeping to keep dust out of the air.
    - Reduce clutter (this collects dust and attracts pests).
    - Don't let pets in the bedroom.
    - Use allergen dust covers on pillows and mattresses.
    - Wash and dry bedding on the hottest settings and vacuum carpets with a HEPA filter vacuum weekly.
    - Keep humidity in your home between 35% and 55%. Dust mites thrive in humid environments.





# General Home Hazards



Home accidents kill one person every 16 minutes in the U.S.

“Protect the Ones you Love” initiative helps parents and caregivers take steps to prevent unintentional injuries in the home.  
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)  
[www.cdc.gov/safechild](http://www.cdc.gov/safechild)

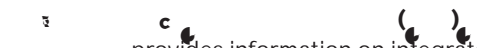
is an injury prevention program whose mission is to prevent injury to children through research and prevention programs. The Coalition is a great resource for injury prevention information and strategies.  
National Office  
Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health  
1-212-342-0514  
[info@injuryfree.org](mailto:info@injuryfree.org)


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# Household Chemicals, Pesticides and Poisons Resources

 provides information on integrated pest management (safer methods to address pest problems).  
nysipm@cornell.edu  
www.nysipm.cornell.edu

 accept hazardous materials that cannot be thrown out or recycled safely, such as appliances, fluorescent light bulbs and pesticides. Contact your city, town or county to learn how to dispose of household hazardous waste safely.  
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8782.html

Visit the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to learn more about household hazardous waste.  
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8485.html

Indoor air levels of pollutants may be 2-5 times higher than outdoor levels. Occasionally they can be as much as 100 times worse.  
—EPA

# Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)



Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral fiber that was used in building insulation, floor and ceiling tiles and other materials until it was banned in 1989. When the material is broken or crumbling, fibers can be breathed in through the air. Long-term exposure to these fibers can cause asbestosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma.



Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, toxic gas. It comes from burning fuels (gas, oil, etc.). CO can kill you or make you ill before you are even aware it is present. Only a CO detector can detect it.



If you have a hot air furnace, it greatly impacts your home's air quality. Make sure your furnace is working properly to avoid indoor air problems like dust and carbon monoxide.



Mold is a fungus that grows in moist, warm areas of the home, like the attic, basement, bathroom and kitchen. Certain molds can cause respiratory and sinus problems or asthma attacks. Many molds are harmless, but some can cause significant health problems.



Radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring, radioactive gas found in soil. Radon may enter basements of houses through cracks in concrete walls and floors or through dirt floors. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the un

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# Lead Hazards

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Lead is a toxin that affects the brain, heart, bones and kidneys. Because of children's growing brains and bodies, lead poisoning has a greater impact on children than adults. Even small amounts of lead in children's bodies can cause permanent learning and behavioral problems, often with no physical symptoms. This can include a lower IQ, hyperactivity and behavioral problems.

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Lead poisoning occurs when harmful amounts of lead are swallowed or breathed in. Homes built before 1978 are at risk for containing hazardous leaded dust and paint. Lead can also be found in soil, jewelry, toys, home remedies, ceramics, candy or water.

One in 38  
U.S. children  
has lead  
poisoning.

—CDC

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