

HAZARDS AT HOME - PART 2

Proper attention to your home environment and safe use of products is important to keeping your family healthy. Here are some topics to consider and resource links to help you.



1 LEAD

How does it get into my home?

Older homes (esp. built before 1978) may have paint or plumbing containing lead which can cause contamination of dust or water. Home construction projects may release lead in the home. Some “natural” medicines, supplements and imported goods may have lead contaminants.

How do I test for lead and remove it?

You can search for the lead history of your home through the website below linked to the Childhood Lead Prevention Program. [Find Your Home's Lead History | Mass.gov](#)

What is it?

Lead is a soft metal with many uses which is poisonous when inhaled or ingested.

Why is it important?

Young children are particularly at risk for lead poisoning, which can cause injury to the brain, kidneys, intestines and other organs. Chronic exposure to lead in childhood can lead to permanent developmental and neurologic injury and impact growth. All infants and young children should have blood tests for routine lead screening through your pediatrician. Children in higher risk communities or who have known exposure risk factors may require more frequent testing.

It is best to use professionally trained lead inspectors and remediation professionals when possible to help reduce your exposure to lead inside your home when making repairs.

[Learn about financial assistance for deleading | Mass.gov](#)

This site has information on all the programs to help defray the cost to homeowners for lead remediation

2 RADON

How does it get into my home?

The primary source comes from a crack or hole in the foundation. Radon levels tend to be the highest in the lowest levels of a home. Another source can be from well-water use.

How to test for radon:

Air testing is the proper way to test. Elevated levels in the home can generally be addressed by professional remediation. If you own a home with private well water, testing your well water is also recommended. The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) recommends testing every two years. [2016 a citizens guide to radon.pdf \(epa.gov\)](#)

What is it?

Radon is an invisible, naturally-occurring gas from the ground.

Why is it important?

It is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second-leading cause overall. It is estimated to cause ~ 21,000 lung cancers deaths a year in the US and >600 new lung cancer cases a year in MA. Mass DPH/Bureau of Environmental Health, 2016. [Radon - get the facts | Mass.gov](#)

For more information:

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/radon-get-the-facts>

Massachusetts Radon hotline: (800) 723-6695 or (413) 586-7525

WELL WATER SAFETY

Why should I be concerned?

Access to safe, uncontaminated drinking water is essential for health. It is an increasing issue that many communities and homes do not have water sources safe from bacteria (e.g. E.coli) or chemicals (e.g. lead, PFAS).

If you have town/city water:

Municipal water sources are regularly monitored. The testing results are required to be publicly reported. You can contact your town/city water department to get details of your water testing.

If you have well water:

Homeowners with well water are advised to have regular yearly testing of their water for bacteria, nitrates and other chemicals (e.g. PFAS, lead). In some situations, it may be advised to test more frequently. If problems are identified, contacting a contractor is recommended.

For more information about well water, please visit:

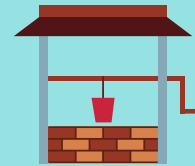
[Well Water Safety & Testing: AAP Policy Explained - HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/APP/Well-Water-Safety-Testing-AAP-Policy-Explained)

Should I be concerned about what type of water I use to mix my infant's formula?

Yes. Infants are at higher risk of harm from contaminated water. It is important that the water you use is safe. Boiling water will not remove all contaminants from water. It can't be relied upon by itself. If your town or well water has been tested safe, then use accordingly.

Is tap water safe vs. bottled water?

Bottled water is regulated and generally can be viewed as safe, though it is not intrinsically better than tap water. Bottled water costs more money and creates more waste (particularly plastic) which can be harmful to the environment. If your tap water has been tested and is shown to be safe, it is a less expensive and better option.



GENERAL RESOURCES-WEBSITES/PHONE NUMBERS

[Pediatric Environmental Health Safety Unit Website](#)

- Mold, water safety, lead, cleaning/disinfection, air quality and others
- New England Region: Phone: (617) 355-8177
- Toll Free: (888) CHILD14 or (888) 244-5314

[Environmental Protection Agency](#)

- All topics
- This website also has regionalized information for Massachusetts

[Mold, Moisture and Mildew](#)

Mass.gov information on ways to prevent and remediate mold growth in buildings, such as schools, buildings, and residences

[Massachusetts Rules Regarding Mold in Rental Properties](#)

What Massachusetts landlords and tenants need to know about mold and the law.

[Healthychildren.org \(sponsored by American Academy of Pediatrics\)](#)

All topics

[Center for Disease Control-National Center for Environmental Health](#)

All topics

[Green Seal Certified Product Directory](#)

Cleaning/disinfection

[Safer Choice](#)

Cleaning/disinfection

[Design for the Environment Certified Disinfectant Product Directory](#)

Cleaning/disinfection