

HAZARDS AT HOME

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 MOLD



What is mold and why does it matter?

Mold is a fungal growth that forms in wet environments caused by various issues such as roof and foundation cracks, flooding, and condensation build up. Mold can cause several potentially severe health problems and may present with allergy or respiratory symptoms.

Can I prevent mold in my home?

Indoor mold growth can be prevented by taking certain steps to help decrease the risk of mold growing factors. Mold grows on damp surfaces. Keeping surfaces dry, using ventilation/dehumidifiers to keep humidity between 30-60% percent, and addressing leaks/moisture promptly can reduce mold growth.

- <https://bit.ly/3LcE9BE>

How do I identify if I have mold in my house?

When someone has mold in their home, they typically present with allergy/cold like symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, sore throat, etc. Signs of mold in your home are musty, unpleasant odors, visible mold which appears as clusters of grey-green, black, or white spots, and water damage to the walls, ceilings, or floors.

- <https://bit.ly/3QKw6NI>
- <https://bit.ly/3RKjfMK>

If I have a mold problem in my home, what steps can I take?

Small areas can be cleaned up on your own, but for larger jobs, an experienced contractor in mold remediation would be best. If you suspect mold in your heating/cooling/ventilation system, speak to a HVAC specialist before turning on the system to avoid spreading mold throughout the building.

For more information

- Pediatric Environmental Health Unit
 - <https://on.bchil.org/3de7yyN>
- Environmental Protection Agency
 - <https://bit.ly/3dcx9Z5>
- Center for Disease Control
 - <https://bit.ly/3dIDPnw>



2 INDOOR AIR QUALITY

How does poor air quality affect my health?

There are many sources for air pollution in the home that left untreated, can cause a variety of immediate or long term health problems. In the most serious of cases (e.g. carbon monoxide), indoor air pollution can cause long lasting respiratory issues and death.

Can I prevent or reduce air pollution in my home?

The simple answer is yes! Attention to ventilation, awareness of water damage or cracks in the roof or foundation, proper maintenance of gas powered/fuel burning appliances, avoidance of smoking in the home, and careful use of chemicals are some examples of ways to limit exposure.

How often should I check my air quality?

If you are experiencing any symptoms from poor air quality (i.e. coughing, wheezing, short of breath) or see visible water damage or signs of mold, it may be a good time to check your air quality. You can do this by contacting an indoor air quality specialist or purchasing an at home air quality tester.

- <https://wapo.st/3QNVdiy>
- <https://bit.ly/3LhOcFO>

For more information on mold and its effect on you and your family

Environmental Protection Agency website:

- <https://bit.ly/3Dpezra>

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

How can cleaners/disinfectants affect health?

Direct exposure to some chemicals can cause immediate (e.g. burn) or long-term injury (e.g. cancer). Excessive use of disinfectants can also contribute to the development of resistant germs ("super bugs"). Some chemicals may be harmful to animals and plants.

- <https://bit.ly/3S8rEtf>

How often do I need to clean or disinfect?

View the form below for a comprehensive table on home cleaning resources for varied surfaces.

- <https://bit.ly/3dikq7e>

How can I choose safe household cleaning products?

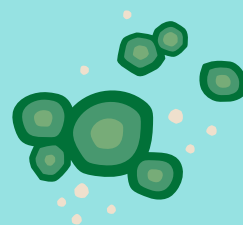
Manufacturers are not required to list ingredients on household products. Choose products certified by "Green Seal", "Safer Choice", or the EPA "Design for the Environment" program.

- <https://bit.ly/3UICWwa>

What can I make/use at home for cleaning and disinfecting?

Soap and water can be a very effective option for cleaning and disinfecting your home. You can also make inexpensive safe products using ingredients such as vinegar, baking soda, and household bleach. Follow these recipes and instructions:

- <https://bit.ly/3U375Qy>
- <https://bit.ly/3QLglAq>



How do I safely use a disinfectant?

Avoid overuse and protect your hands and eyes. See link below:

- <https://bit.ly/3Do3iay>

GENERAL RESOURCES-WEBSITES/PHONE NUMBERS

Pediatric Environmental Health Safety Unit Website

- <https://bit.ly/3BD0wNx>
- New England Region: Phone: (617) 355-8177
- Toll Free: (888) CHILD14 or (888) 244-5314

Environmental Protection Agency

- <https://bit.ly/3LgGfjX>
- This website also has regionalized information for Massachusetts

Mass.gov

- <https://bit.ly/3LgrVb3>
- <https://bit.ly/3eOHjiS>
- Both of these websites provides useful information on how to advocate for mold concerns if you are residing in a rental property.

Healthychildren.org (sponsored by American Academy of Pediatrics)

- <https://bit.ly/3dbWXo0>

Center for Disease Control-National Center for Environmental Health

- <https://bit.ly/3LbxGXL>

Green Seal Certified Product Directory

- <https://bit.ly/3Dv3qW5>

Safer Choice

- <https://bit.ly/3QJ7xka>

Design for the Environment Certified Disinfectant Product Directory

- <https://bit.ly/3dimJXW>

