

7 steps to a healthier habitat in the home

Adapted utilizing information provided by:
Jim LaRue & Environmental Health Watch

Keep it Dry!

Damp basements, leaks from plumbing fixtures or roofs, and baths or kitchens without fans, can create moisture and mold problems. Open windows and report leaks to your landlord.

Keep it Clean!

Lead dust and residue from pesticides are found in carpets, floors and hard surfaces. Contaminants can be tracked into the home and may present an even greater health hazard. Remember to remove shoes at the door or use cleanable mats at entryways.

Keep it Pest-Free!

Droppings from pests as well as their body parts are major triggers for people with asthma. Eliminating pests eliminates this threat.

Keep it Well Ventilated!

Don't contaminate the home by using products with strong odors. Circulate fresh air for the people living in the home and keep air flowing near gas furnaces, hot water tanks, dryers and stoves.

Avoid Contaminants!

Radon is a naturally occurring, colorless, odorless, gas, which can seep into a home from the ground and can lead to lung cancer, especially for smokers. Smoking is an obvious indoor air-quality problem. Homes in high-risk areas should test for radon.

Keep it Safe!

Extension cords under a rug are a fire hazard, no railings on stairs and rugs that slide easily can cause falls, unlocked cabinets with drugs or chemicals can lead to the poisoning of a child. Window guards that provide protection, yet can be opened by an adult in case of a fire, can be installed.

Keep it Well Maintained!

Maintaining an awareness of possible threats to our safety and health at home is an ever-present challenge.

For more information about these steps to creating and maintaining healthier living spaces.

**Visit the National Center for Healthy Housing
www.centerforhealthyhousing.org**

Additional Resources

Websites

Cleveland Tenants Organization
www.clevelandtenants.org

Environmental Health Watch
www.ehw.org

Cleveland Department of Public Health
www.clevelandhealth.org

Cuyahoga County Board of Health
www.ccbh.net

Housing Cleveland— FREE Housing search
www.housingcleveland.org

Other resources

Cleveland Cuyahoga Healthy Homes Program

Who can apply?

- Owners and tenants with children under the age of 16
- Seniors above the age of 65
- You must have a diagnosed respiratory condition.

These repairs may include :

- Specialized cleaning
- Removal of water damaged and molded materials
- Insulating the home, furnace and hot water tank repairs, health and safety items.

For more information, contact
Cuyahoga County Board of Health
(216) 201-2001 x 1524.

For Rental property owners: Safe work practices, and the control of lead hazards are preventive measures that will protect children.

The Lead Maintenance Certificate is a voluntary program that demonstrates that a property owner has taken preventative maintenance repairs, received Essential Maintenance Practice Training, and follows city and state guidelines to ensure that a child will not be lead poisoned while residing in or visiting their property.

**For more information, contact the City of Cleveland Lead Safe Living Information Line
216.263.LEAD (5323)**

How to find and make a Healthy Home



It is important that Clevelanders are aware of the dangers of substandard housing.

This guide will assist you in finding and maintaining a "healthy home" for you, your children, and other family members.

"The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under an award with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development."

Brought to you in partnership by:
**Cleveland Department of Public Health
and
Cleveland Tenants Organization.**



*He is happiest, be he king or peasant,
who finds peace in his home.*

- [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#)

Everyone should want to live in, and strive for a safe and healthy home. On average, people spend most of their time indoors where the air is much dirtier than outdoor air.

Indoor air is a major cause of allergies, asthma, headaches, breathing problems, and other long-term health issues.

This pamphlet is designed to help you in your search for, and maintenance of a healthy home.



If you have questions about your home, where to find a home, or about your rights as a renter, please call:

**The Cleveland Tenants Organization
Rental Information Center.**

(216)432-0609

We are available Monday through Friday
to assist you with your concerns.



Lead Hazards

I have to vacate my unit and need to find safe, decent, healthy housing...Where can I go?

The Cleveland Tenants Organization was created in 1975 and we are a non-profit organization with **FREE information for tenants living in Cleveland.**

We can assist you in:

- Learning your rights as a tenant
- Learning more about home health hazards
- Learning where to go to search for housing
- Locating resources available to help you handle a crisis.

Call us at (216)432-0609, we can help!

Should I be concerned about Lead paint?

Most of the homes built before 1978 in Cleveland in fact do contain lead. Prior to renting a home, you should ask the property owners if they are aware of any lead in the property.

The Federal law requires landlords to disclose their knowledge of lead in the property and to provide you with a booklet called "Protect Your Family From Lead In Your Home."



If you think your home may have high levels of lead:

- Get your children (under age 6) tested for lead
- Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- Make sure children eat healthy, low-fat foods.
- Apply to free lead programs at the Health Department
- Regularly clean floors, window sills, and other surfaces.
- Take off shoes before entering house.
- Talk to your landlord about safely fixing surfaces with peeling or chipping paint. (call CTO at 216-432-0609 or call 1-800-424-LEAD for guidelines).
- Don't use a belt-sander, propane torch, dry scraper, or dry sandpaper on painted surfaces that may contain lead.

Asthma Triggers

How can I help prevent and control Asthma in my children?

Tips for controlling asthma triggers:

- **Tobacco smoke:** Do not allow smoking in the house or in the car.
- **Dust:** Triggers accumulate in dust and dirt on surfaces, so keep dust levels down, using wet cleaning and vacuuming (with an allergen-proof or double bag). Too much to do? Start with the bedroom and make it as free as possible from triggers.
- **Dust mites:** Special mite-proof pillow and mattress covers and frequent washing of bedding in hot water can prevent accumulation of dust mites.
- **Cockroaches:** Deny roaches food, water, hiding places and entry. Don't use pesticide sprays, fogs or bombs – they are not effective and can expose you to dangerous pesticides. Gel baits, bait stations and boric acid are effective
- **Mold:** Throw out things that are moldy or have been soaked for more than a couple of days. Get information on cleaning mold safely. The key to reducing mold is reducing moisture problems
- **Rodents:** Use snap traps, not poisons.
- **Combustion Products:** Home appliances that burn fuel that, if not properly vented, can trigger asthma attacks. Have the furnace, water heater, flues and chimney inspected each year, don't use unvented (non-electric) space heaters, and use exhaust fans.
- **Household Products:** Avoid pesticides, solvents, building materials and cleaning products with strong odors.



Information courtesy of:
Environmental Health Watch
For more information, visit www.ehw.org