

### Checklist for Carbon Monoxide

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do you ever use gas grills or small gas engines inside an attached garage? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you ever warm your car in an attached garage?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you ever use a kerosene heater in your home?                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you ever heat your home with the stove or oven?                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you forget to use the exhaust fan while cooking with a gas stove?       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you concerned your appliances have not been routinely checked?         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you failed to install CO detectors?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, a CO hazard may exist in your home.

### Checklist for Unintentional Injuries

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Are there any cords, plastic bags, or small toys that a child can reach? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have clutter on stairways or walkways?                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are pool, spa or hot tub unfenced or ungated?                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you leave children unsupervised while in bath tubs or swimming pools? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered "yes" to any of the above, a safety hazard may exist in your home.

### Checklist for Fire Safety

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do you have smoke detectors installed near each sleeping area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have a fire escape plan for your family?                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are matches, lighters and candles out of reach of children?    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are fireplaces, heaters and radiators free of flammable items? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is the kitchen attended at all times during cooking?           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have a working fire extinguisher available?             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are water temperatures set to prevent scalding?                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered "no" to any of the above, a fire/burn hazard may exist in your home.

### Checklist for Preventing Falls

- |  | Yes                      | No                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Are your floors, stairs and hallways free of items someone could fall over or trip on? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are stairway gates used to prevent young children from entering?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is a ladder used every time to access items out of reach?                              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is your home well lit at night?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do all rugs have a rubber back to prevent slipping?                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered "no" to any of the above, a safety hazard may exist in your home.

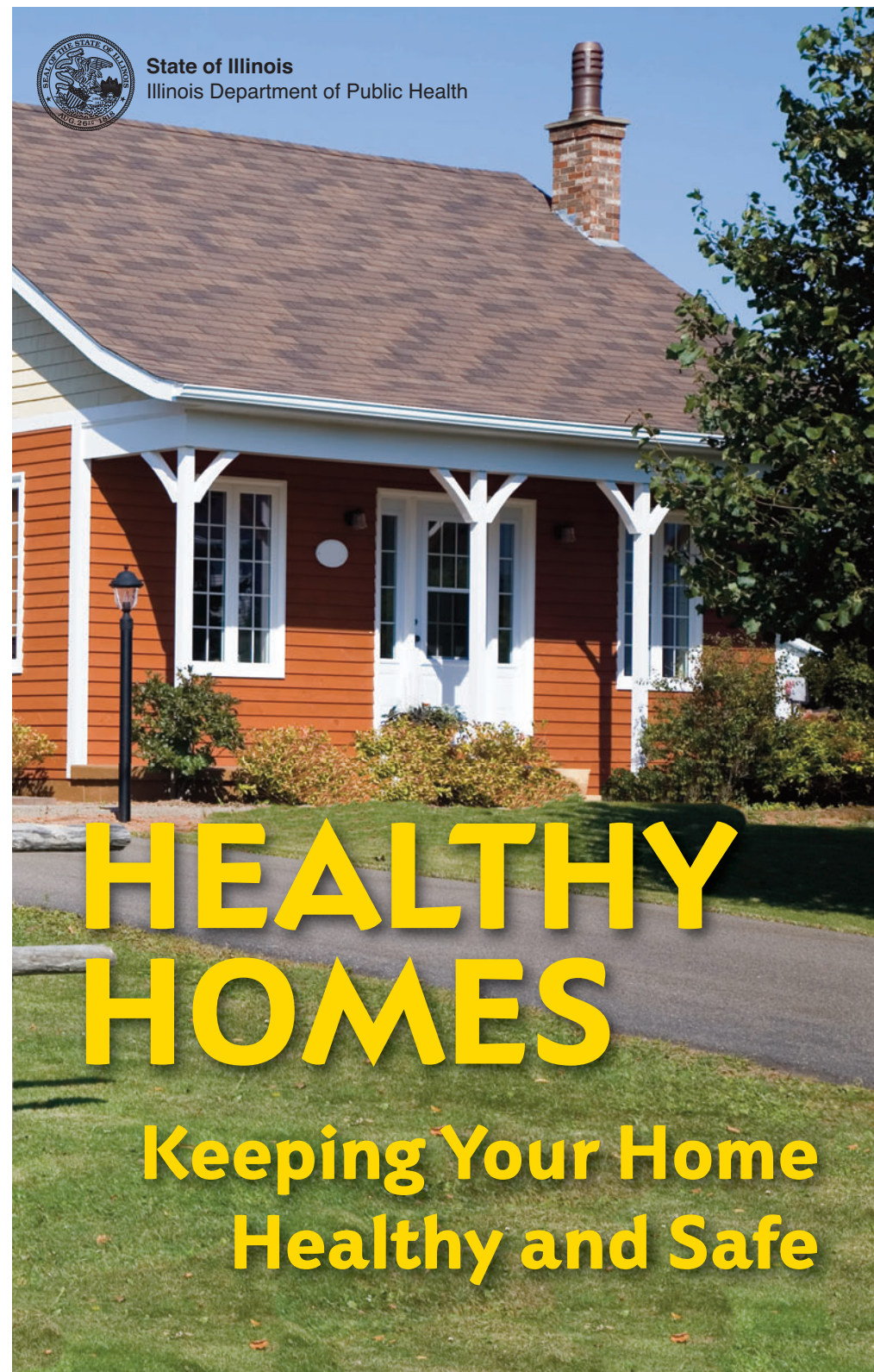
### Checklist to Prevent Accidental Poisoning

- |   | Yes                      | No                       |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Are all medicines, pesticides, cleaning and harmful products stored out of reach of children? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are food and non food items stored separately?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are all product containers clearly marked?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are carbon monoxide detectors installed outside all sleeping areas?                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are all houseplants non-toxic?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered "no" to any of the above, a safety hazard may exist in your home.



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department of Public Health



# HEALTHY HOMES

## Keeping Your Home Healthy and Safe



### Checklist for a Healthy Home

Does your home have:	Yes	No
Chipping or peeling paint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water leaks or moisture problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cats, dogs or birds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone who smokes indoors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cockroaches, mice or rats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural gas or propane gas appliances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Areas where maintenance is needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazards that could cause injury?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stored chemicals or pesticides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High concentrations of radon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, your home may have a health or safety hazard.**

### Checklist for Lead

	Yes	No
Was your home built before 1978?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there peeling, chipping or damaged paint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you planning or have you recently completed a renovation project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use or consume imported products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you work in an occupation exposing you to lead?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, lead hazards may exist in your home.**

### Checklist for Indoor Air Quality

Are these asthma triggers present?	Yes	No
Tobacco smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mold	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cockroaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there moisture problems or water leaks in your home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there open food containers for pests to feed in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there places for pests to enter the home or hide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, asthma triggers and allergens may exist in your home.**

### Checklist for Pest Control

	Yes	No
Are there any water leaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is food and garbage left open to pests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do pests have entry or hiding places?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, home health hazards may exist.**

### Checklist for Radon

	Yes	No
Did the previous owner of your home disclose that they had tested for radon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your home have a radon remediation system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you tested your home for radon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “no” to any of the above, home health hazards may exist.**

### Checklist for Mold

	Yes	No
Are there any plumbing leaks or moisture problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there areas that lack proper ventilation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, mold hazards may exist in your home.**



## **HEALTHY HOMES**

**Keeping Your Home Healthy and Safe**

### **Illinois Lead Program**

Illinois Department of Public Health  
Division of Environmental Health

866-909-3572

217-782-3517

TTY 800-547-0466

525 W. Jefferson St., Third Floor

Springfield, IL 62761

## HEALTHY HOMES

### Keeping Homes Healthy and Safe

The home is where the family comes together to experience security, shelter and safety. Because we spend more than 50 percent of our lives indoors, it is important to make sure our families have a healthy home in which to live. Children are at a higher risk because they are still growing, discovering their environment and spending much of their time where many hazards exist.

Some of the serious health problems children experience start from what families do or have in their homes. For example, dust from lead-based paint may cause lead poisoning, mold that results from water leaks or excess moisture problems may cause increased allergies or asthma occurrences, malfunctioning gas appliances may result in carbon monoxide poisoning, and improper use or storage of pesticides and other chemicals could result in accidental poisonings.

Good mental and physical health depends on homes that are well maintained and free of hazards. On the other hand, poorly maintained homes containing health hazards promote poorer quality health and risk of injury.

Understanding, identifying and eliminating the dangers that may be in your home, may protect the health of your family.

Also, if you do home repairs or live in a home where contractors or property managers do repairs, this booklet will help you understand the importance of performing repairs in a safe manner.



### National Resources

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Housing  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/publications/books/housing/housing.htm>

Housing and Urban Development Healthy Homes Program  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/hhi/index.cfm>

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Injury-Related Resources  
<http://www.cdc.gov/InjuryViolenceSafety/>

National Injury Prevention  
<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/dataandstats.html>

Consumer Products Safety Commission  
[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

## REFERENCES

### Illinois Resources

#### Illinois Lead Program

Illinois Department of Public Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
217-782-3517

#### Radon

Illinois Emergency Management Agency  
Radon Hotline  
800-325-1245  
www.radon.illinois.gov  
217-785-9889

#### Asthma Program

Illinois Department of Public Health  
Office of Health Promotion  
217-782-4977

#### Mold and Indoor Air Quality

Illinois Department of Public Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
Toxicology Section  
217-782-5830

#### Pests

Illinois Department of Public Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
Vector Control  
217-782-5830

#### Hazardous Household Products

Illinois Poison Center  
800-222-1222

#### Injury Prevention

Illinois Department of Public Health  
Office of Health Promotion  
217-558-4081

This booklet provides information on the seven principles of healthy housing as defined by the National Center for Healthy Housing:

- Clean
- Dry
- Ventilated
- Safe
- Well-maintained
- Free of pests
- Free of contaminants

Each section addresses a major source of exposure to a health hazard, a home survey, and recommendations for preventing and eliminating a home health hazard.

Not all home health hazards are addressed in this brochure. Here is a brief survey to assist you in evaluating your home for some hazards.

### Checklist for a Healthy Home

<b>Does your home have:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Chipping or peeling paint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water leaks or moisture problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cats, dogs or birds?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone who smokes indoors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cockroaches, mice or rats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural gas or propane gas appliances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Areas where maintenance is needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hazards that could cause injury?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stored chemicals or pesticides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High concentrations of radon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, your home may have a health or safety hazard.**

## LEAD POISONING

Lead is a metal used in many products to make them more colorful and durable. Since lead has been removed from gasoline and food containers, the most common source of exposure is deteriorating lead-based house paint or varnish. Lead may be in your home if the house was built before 1978.

Lead-based paint in good condition is not an immediate problem. Lead also may be found in other sources such as imported herbal remedies, pottery, canned foods and candies.

Lead in the body, at any level, can pose a serious health hazard. When lead is absorbed, it can cause damage to the brain, nervous system and other vital organs. Lead can affect children even at extremely low levels without any noticeable symptoms. Small children most often take in lead from dust created from deteriorating lead-based paint, contaminated soil, or lead-based products. The dust collects on their hands and is ingested through constant hand-to-mouth behavior.



Lead poisoning may result in behavior problems, learning disorders, diminished I.Q., fatigue, hyperactivity, hearing problems and, in severe cases, seizures, coma, or death.

Exposure during pregnancy can cause decreased birth weight, reduced growth, miscarriage, or fetal death.

Lead also can be harmful to adults. Adults are mainly exposed by breathing in lead dust.

## Preventing Other Home Accidents and Injuries

### Gun Safety

- Keep all firearms and ammunition in a locked cabinet.
- Never clean a gun with others in the room.
- Never point a gun at a person.
- Take a gun safety course.
- Teach children that guns are not toys and they can kill people.

### Power Equipment

- Follow manufacturer instructions for storing and using lawn and other power equipment.
- Never allow young children to ride on lawn tractors.
- Wear protective gear when using power equipment.

### Riding Toys and Transportation

- Provide protective gear such as helmets and knee pads for family members riding bicycles, scooters, in-line skates, skateboards, and all-terrain vehicles.
- Follow safety seat rules when transporting children in automobiles.

### Summary

- Teach children home safety tips, fire prevention, and fire escape routes.
- Have older children and adults in household learn first aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.
- Protect your family by taking steps to eliminate home hazards.

## Help Yourself to a Healthy Home!

## Things You Can Do to Prevent Poisonings

- Place medicines, liquor, cigarettes, bleach, detergents, chemicals, and other cleaners that can harm children out of their reach or place safety latches on cabinets containing these types of products.
- Keep products such as lamp oil, kerosene, paint remover, bug spray, and other pesticides in safe places.
- Keep products in original well-marked containers.
- Use proper lighting when administering/taking medicine to avoid accidental overdose.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors within 15 feet of all sleeping areas.
- Use non-toxic products when possible.
- Never mix cleaning products together.
- If it is necessary to use strong chemicals, use them when children are not present.
- Store food and non food products separately.
- Make sure houseplants are non-toxic for children and pets.

## Checklist to Prevent Accidental Poisoning

	Yes	No
Are all medicines, pesticides, cleaning and harmful products stored out of reach of children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are food and non food items stored separately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all product containers clearly marked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are carbon monoxide detectors installed outside all sleeping areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all houseplants non-toxic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If you answered “no” to any of the above, a safety hazard may exist in your home.</b>		

## Preventing Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning can be prevented by taking simple precautions around the house. These methods may include:

- Washing a child’s hands, mouth, face and toys often
- Cleaning up paint chips and peeling paint
- Washing floors, countertops and window sills weekly with an all-purpose detergent
- Feeding children a diet high in iron, calcium and vitamin C
- Offering children healthy snacks, such as fruit or pretzels, throughout the day to prevent mouthing non-food items
- Using proper safety measures when renovating or remodeling your home to avoid creating lead dust
- Assuring that children and pregnant women do not enter the work area until renovations are complete and the area has been thoroughly cleaned
- Allowing the cold water to run for several minutes in the morning before using it for drinking, cooking or mixing infant formula
- Removing shoes when coming indoors so lead dust is not tracked inside
- Laundering work clothes separately from other clothes if your occupation involves exposure to lead
- Not serving or storing food in pottery made outside the United States

## Checklist for Lead

	Yes	No
Was your home built before 1978?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there peeling, chipping or damaged paint?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you planning or have you recently completed a renovation project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use or consume imported products?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you work in an occupation exposing you to lead?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If you answered “yes” to any of the above, lead hazards may exist in your home.</b>		

## INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

Indoor air pollution comes from what people do or have in their homes. Poor indoor air quality can contribute to adverse health effects. Risk factors, known as triggers, can make a person's allergies or asthma worse.

Asthma is a condition that affects the breathing airways. During an asthma attack, the airways in the lungs become swollen and the chest tightens, restricting the movement of air into the lungs. A person may cough or wheeze and have trouble breathing. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be controlled through medical care and reducing triggers.

Allergies are the ways the body overreacts to common substances often found in the home. Allergic reactions may involve a stuffy nose, sneezing, itching, watery eyes, rashes, and swelling.

Not everyone is allergic to the same triggers. Some triggers may include:

- Tobacco smoke
- Animal dander
- Household dust
- Dust mites
- Mold
- Pollen
- Strong odors
- Cockroach droppings
- Solvent chemicals
- Cleaning agents



## Things You Can Do to Prevent Falls

- Keep hallways and stairways free of things people might slip on or fall over.
- Keep stairs and handrails in good condition.
- Place safety gates at stairway openings to prevent young children from entering.
- Keep potential tripping hazards picked up such as toys, shoes and magazines.
- Use lighting at night.
- Place gripper tape on back of rugs to prevent slipping.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Do not use tables or chairs as a makeshift ladder.

## Checklist for Preventing Falls

	Yes	No
Are your floors, stairs and hallways free of items someone could fall over or trip on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are stairway gates used to prevent young children from entering?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a ladder used every time to access items out of reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your home well lit at night?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do all rugs have a rubber back to prevent slipping?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “no” to any of the above, a safety hazard may exist in your home.**



## Things You Can Do to Prevent Fires and Burns

- Install smoke detectors on every floor of your home within 15 feet of sleeping areas.
- Test alarms every six months to make sure the alarm is working properly.
- Keep matches, lighters and candles out of reach of children and pets.
- Plug unused outlets or block with furniture.
- Keep flammable items away from fireplaces, heaters and radiators.
- Set hot water temperature below 120°.
- Take caution in the kitchen:
  - Always stay in the kitchen while cooking
  - Turn handles of pots and pans to inside of stove so children cannot bump into or grab them
  - Install ground fault circuit interrupters in kitchen and bathroom outlets
- Develop a fire escape plan with the family and practice getting out of the windows and meeting at a safe place

### Checklist for Fire Safety

	Yes	No
Do you have smoke detectors installed near each sleeping area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a fire escape plan for your family?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are matches, lighters and candles out of reach of children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are fireplaces, heaters and radiators free of flammable items?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the kitchen attended at all times during cooking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a working fire extinguisher available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are water temperatures set to prevent scalding?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If you answered “no” to any of the above, a fire/burn hazard may exist in your home.</b>		

## Controlling Asthma and Allergies

Recognize your triggers and know what to avoid. Keeping a clean and well-maintained home can reduce some allergens.

- Do not allow tobacco smokers to smoke inside the home.
- Keep a clean home by wet washing surfaces weekly.
- Wash bedding, carpets and cloth toys often.
- Keep pets out of bedrooms.
- Repair water leaks and clean mold properly.
- Use fans and ventilation to reduce excess moisture.
- Store food in tightly sealed containers.
- Reduce clutter, holes, cracks, food and water sources to control pests.
- Use safe pest control methods.
- Service gas and oil appliances annually.

In the event of a severe allergic reaction, seek emergency medical attention immediately.

### Checklist for Indoor Air Quality

	Yes	No
<b>Are these asthma triggers present?</b>		
Tobacco smoke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mold	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cockroaches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Are there moisture problems or water leaks in your home?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Are there open food containers for pests to feed in?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Are there places for pests to enter the home or hide?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>If you answered “yes” to any of the above, asthma triggers and allergens may exist in your home.</b>		

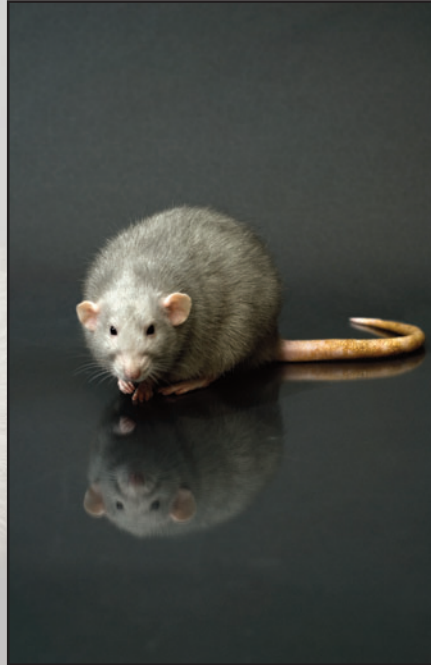
## PEST CONTROL

Pests carry disease, can contaminate food, and damage homes. Bites from some insects, rodents and spiders can cause serious illness. Roaches and dust mites can increase allergy and asthma triggers.

You may already know if you have cockroaches, fleas, mice or rats. What you need to know now is how big the problem is and where they are entering the home.

Look for these problems to determine where the pests are:

- Waste droppings
- Chew marks on woodwork or walls
- Open food packages
- Water leaks
- Cracks, crevices and holes
- Clutter such as paper bags, cardboard, newspapers, discarded bottles and jars
- Pet food bowls



Bed bugs are attracted by the warmth of our bodies and usually emerge at night from hiding places, most often mattresses, box springs, bed frames and bedding, seeking human blood. Blood smears on bedding may be the only indication of a bed bug infestation. When bed bugs are suspected, sleeping and resting places should be thoroughly inspected.

## Things You Can Do to Prevent Choking, Drowning, Suffocation and Strangulation

- Keep small objects like coins, marbles, balloons, strings, and toys with small parts away from young children.
- Make sure children are sitting when they eat.
- Remain present when a child is eating foods they may easily choke on such as hot dogs, popcorn, nuts and hard candy.
- Never leave a child alone in the tub or swimming area.
- Make sure gates around pools and hot tubs have a self-latching gate at least 5 feet high.
- Place infant on his/her back while sleeping.
- Use safety regulation furniture for infants and toddlers.
- Keep plastic bags out of reach of small children.
- Keep window blinds and shades cords out of a child's reach.
- Have older children and adults take CPR class to know what to do when someone chokes or needs resuscitation.

## Checklist for Unintentional Injuries

	Yes	No
Are there any cords, plastic bags, or small toys that a child can reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have clutter on stairways or walkways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pool, spa or hot tub unfenced or ungated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you leave children unsupervised while in bath tubs or swimming pools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered "yes" to any of the above, a safety hazard may exist in your home.**

## UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

Home safety includes preventing unintentional injuries. Safety hazards can be serious problems in the home. Unintentional injuries in the home from falls, poisoning, choking, drowning, and suffocation are the No. 1 cause of death in children in the United States. Any room in the home can have something that can harm a family member.

Very young and older adults are more likely to suffer an accidental injury in the home. It is important to consider people's age when thinking about how to keep your home safe.

Suffocation is the leading cause of injury death in the home for children younger than 1 year old. Drowning is reported to be the leading cause of injury death in the home for 1 through 4 year olds, followed by fires and burns. Injury deaths accounted for more than one-half of the deaths in persons 13 - 32 years of age. Injury death rates are lowest for children 6 - 11 years of age and highest for people 85 years or older.

The good news is that injuries can be prevented by taking a few extra precautions in your home to protect your family. It takes just a few minutes using some low-cost steps to make your home a safer place.



## Safe Pest Control

Like humans, pests require food, water and shelter to survive. Using an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) method for pest control is a more common sense approach to ridding your home of pests. IPM:

- Works by addressing the cause of the problem and taking the long-term approach to eliminating the pests
- Denies pests of food, water, shelter, and a way to enter your home
- Eliminates the use of traditional chemical pesticides
- Uses baits and powders such as gel baits, traps and borate powder

Many chemicals used to kill pests, also can be harmful to humans if inhaled or ingested. Pesticides can contain irritants that can trigger asthma attacks. Improper use of pesticides may cause accidental poisonings.

Consult an Integrated Pest Management program to determine the best prevention and elimination methods.

## Checklist for Pest Control

	Yes	No
Are there any water leaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is food and garbage left open to pests?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do pests have entry or hiding places?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, home health hazards may exist.**

## RADON

Radon is a cancer-causing, naturally-occurring radioactive gas that you cannot see, smell or taste. Radon is found in soil and rocks beneath homes, in well waters and in some building materials. Radon usually moves up from the ground and migrates into homes and other buildings through cracks and other holes in the foundation. The buildings trap radon inside, where it accumulates and may become a health hazard if the building is not properly ventilated.

About one in every 15 homes has a radon problem. It is possible for one home to have high levels of radon and the home next door to have low levels.

Radon gas exposure has no short-term recognizable symptoms. The radioactive gas causes damage to the cells deep within the lungs. Breathing radon over prolonged periods can increase your risk of lung cancer.

Indoor radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2003 "Assessment of Risks from Radon in Homes," estimates radon causes about 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year.



## Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Have your furnace and water heater checked annually.
- Make sure chimneys are in good condition.
- Never use open flame space heaters indoors.
- Never warm up your vehicle inside the garage.
- Never use charcoal grills or engines inside the garage or home.
- Never use the kitchen stove or oven to heat your home.
- Always use exhaust fans when using a gas cooking stove.
- Install CO detectors within 15 feet of each bedroom door and replace batteries when the time changes, twice per year.
- If you develop CO poisoning symptoms, go outdoors and call emergency services for help.

## Checklist for Carbon Monoxide

	Yes	No
Do you ever use gas grills or small gas engines inside an attached garage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ever warm your car in an attached garage?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ever use a kerosene heater in your home?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ever heat your home with the stove or oven?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you forget to use the exhaust fan while cooking with a gas stove?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you concerned your appliances have not been routinely checked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you failed to install CO detectors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, a CO hazard may exist in your home.**

## CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly gas that you cannot see, taste or smell. CO can come from faulty or non-vented fuel-burning appliances such as:

- Gas cooking stoves, ovens and clothes dryers
- Gas water heaters
- Gas and oil furnaces and boilers
- Gas and kerosene space heaters
- Propane gas and charcoal grills
- Cars, trucks, campers, tractors and other recreational vehicles
- Gas and liquid propane powered small equipment
- House fires and burning buildings
- Tobacco smoke
- Blocked chimneys and flues

Even though CO can make you very sick, many people do not know when they are being exposed. Reports indicate that more than 500 people die annually from CO in the United States.

The first symptoms of CO poisoning may be tiredness, sleepiness, weakness and confusion. More severe CO poisoning may cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting. People who survive may suffer from loss of sight or hearing, heart and lung problems, and brain damage.



## Eliminating Radon

The only way to tell how much radon is present in a home is to test. Testing is not expensive. If high levels of radon are found, you may need an active remediation system to remove the radon from your home. Mitigation is recommended when radon concentrations are 4.0 picoCuries or more of radon per 1 liter of air.

### Things you can do:

- Test your home. Radon kits are available at hardware stores or may access the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) web site at <http://www.state.il.us/iema/radon/MeasurementLabsPriceList.asp> to locate test kits.
- Stop smoking and discourage smoking in your home. Smoke increases the risk of lung cancer from radon exposure.
- Increase air flow in your home.
- Seal cracks in floors and walls.
- Install a remediation system if high levels of radon are found.
- Use only trained and licensed professional radon mitigators and technicians approved for mitigation practices by IEMA.

### Checklist for Radon

	Yes	No
Did the previous owner of your home disclose that they had tested for radon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your home have a radon remediation system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you tested your home for radon?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “no” to any of the above, home health hazards may exist.**

## INDOOR MOLD

Molds are living organisms that grow naturally when warm, moist, dark conditions exist. Mold can grow indoors on wood, concrete, plaster, drywall, furniture, walls, and carpet. Leaking roofs, water pipes in bathrooms and kitchens, poorly ventilated closets, damp basements or wet crawlspaces often contribute to the growth of mold. Mold is most often gray or black, but also may be white. Mold has a musty, stale, earthy odor.

Some people are allergic to mold and it may worsen asthma symptoms, allergies or other respiratory conditions when disturbed.

Common symptoms of mold exposure are cough, runny nose, congestion, and breathing problems.

More severe reactions may occur to those who are exposed to large amounts of mold.

Environmental experts suggest it is better to spend time preventing moisture problems and cleaning mold than testing to determine the type of mold. Health experts agree that health problems come from the length of time someone has been exposed to mold rather than the type of mold.

Mold also may cause the deterioration of buildings.



## Removing Mold From Your Home

Discard moldy materials in your home such as carpets, mattresses, wallboard, ceiling tile, insulation, paper, and cardboard boxes.

Clean surfaces with a mix of detergent and water. If necessary use 1 cup of chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water. (NOTE: Do not combine chlorine bleach with any ammonia products). Wear waterproof rubber gloves, long sleeves, and goggles when cleaning. An N-95 respirator also should be worn if the mold problem is extensive. For very large projects, you may want to hire a professional mold abatement company.

## Preventing Mold and Moisture Hazards

The best way to prevent mold is to prevent excess moisture.

- Repair water leaks and plumbing fixtures.
- Keep all surfaces clean and dry.
- Clean and repair rain gutters so the water flows away from the foundation of the home.
- Use a dehumidifier inside your home to keep the humidity around 50 percent.
- Vent clothes dryers and exhaust fans to the outside of the home.
- Replace and discard any water-damaged materials.
- Increase air flow in problem areas, such as closets and walls behind furniture.
- Dry damp areas quickly using fans.

## Checklist for Mold

	Yes	No
Are there any plumbing leaks or moisture problems?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there areas that lack proper ventilation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered “yes” to any of the above, mold hazards may exist in your home.**