

Best Practices for a Healthy Home

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) states that a healthy home is sited, designed, built, renovated, and maintained to support health. A healthy homes approach is a coordinated, comprehensive, and holistic approach to preventing diseases and injuries that result from housing-related hazards and deficiencies. The following are key elements of a healthy home:

1. **Keep it Dry:** Prevent water from entering your home as moisture in your home can be a source of mold. Look for and repair leaks in the roof, rain water entering the home due to poor drainage, and be sure check your plumbing for leaks.
2. **Keep it Clean:** Control the source of dust and contaminants, create smooth and cleanable surfaces, reduce clutter, and use effective wet-cleaning methods. A source of water to ensure the occupants and home can be cleaned.
3. **Keep it Safe:** Store poisons out of the reach of children and properly label. Secure loose rugs and keep children's play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand. Ensure water supply is safe and approved – homes on shared or private wells should be routinely sampled.
4. **Keep it Well-Ventilated:** Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens and use whole house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home.
5. **Keep it Pest-Free:** All pests look for food, water and shelter. Seal cracks and openings throughout the home; store food in pest resistant containers, clean dishes and remove trash regularly. If needed, use sticky-traps and baits in closed containers, along with least toxic pesticides. If you use a pesticide be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. Many pests are hitchhikers and are brought into your home on people and items you bring in – take care when traveling or bringing things in to your home.
6. **Keep it Contaminant Free:** Reduce lead-related hazards in pre- 1978 homes by fixing deteriorated paint, and keeping floors and window areas clean using a wet- cleaning approach. Test your home for radon, a naturally occurring dangerous gas that enters homes through soil, crawlspaces, and foundation cracks.
7. **Keep it Protected from the Elements:** Keep plumbing protected from freezing and occupants safe from undue heat loss by having an approved and functioning heating system. The use of fuel-using space heaters and ovens is extremely dangerous and should not be done indoors. Electric space heaters are only meant for short-term and supplemental use. Operable windows are required to permit adequate heat loss from the body during warmer months.
8. **Keep it Well Illuminated:** A combination of adequate natural and artificial light must be available.
9. **Keep it Maintained:** Inspect, clean and repair your home routinely, call the Inspections Department at 309-752-1509 to find out to make safe repairs or if and when you need a Permit. Take care of minor repairs and problems before they become large repairs and problems.