

# How to Make Your Home a Healthy Home



**A Room-By-Room Look at Healthy Home Tips**

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# GOOD HEALTH BEGINS AT HOME

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee.

People in the United States spend about half of every day inside their homes. A healthy home is designed, built, and maintained in support of good health. This Healthy Homes guide is a comprehensive approach to preventing diseases and injuries that result from housing-related hazards and deficiencies. Here you will find information about maintaining a Healthy Home. Start by learning the eight Healthy Homes principles. Keep your home: dry, clean, pest-free, safe, contaminant-free, ventilated, maintained, and thermally controlled.

**Dry:** Damp houses provide a good environment for mites, roaches, rodents and molds.

**Clean:** Clean homes help reduce pest infestations and exposure to contaminants.

**Pest-Free:** Studies have shown exposure to mice and cockroaches can increase asthma attacks in children. Improper pesticide treatments for pest infestations can worsen health problems since pesticide residues in homes also pose health risks.

**Safe:** The majority of children's injuries occur in the home. Falls are the most frequent cause of residential injuries to children, followed by injuries from objects in the home, burns and poisonings.

**Contaminant-Free:** Chemical exposures include lead, radon, carbon monoxide, pesticides, asbestos, and tobacco smoke. Exposures are often higher indoors than outdoors.

**Ventilated:** Studies have shown that increasing the fresh air in a home improves respiratory health.

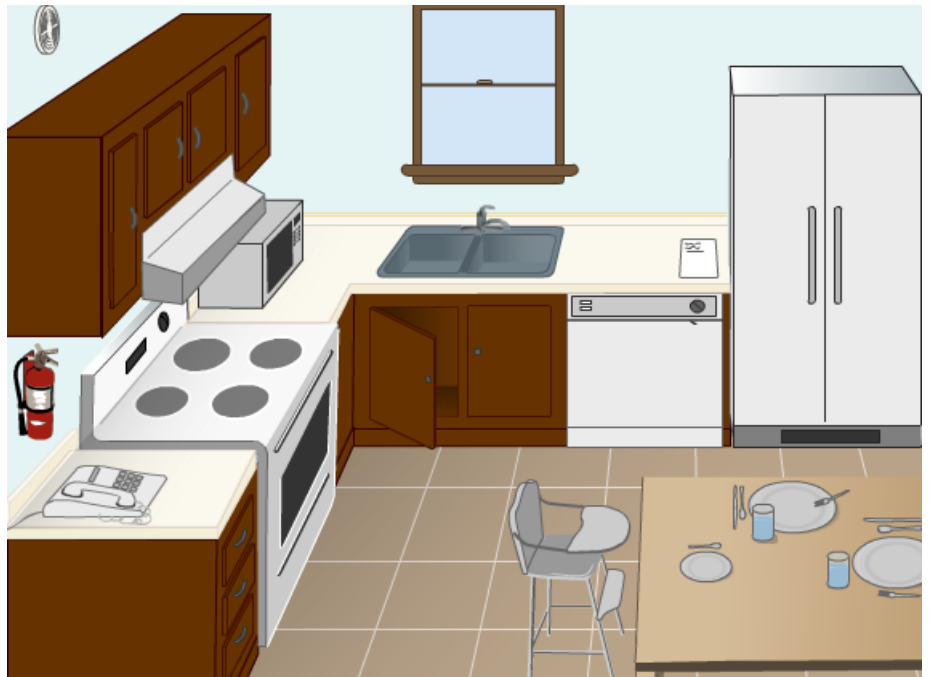
**Maintained:** Poorly maintained homes are at risk for moisture and pest problems. Deteriorated lead-based paint in homes built before 1978 is the primary cause of lead poisoning in children.

**Thermally Controlled:** Houses that do not maintain adequate temperatures may place the safety of residents at increased risk from exposure to extreme cold or heat.

# KITCHEN

## Health and Safety Tips

- Keep your kitchen clean and uncluttered. Wash cutting boards and knives frequently.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Properly prepare and store foods.
- Thoroughly cook raw foods such as meats, chicken, and fish.
- Promptly repair leaking pipes to avoid water damage and mold growth.
- Keep flammable objects away from the stove.
- Keep cleaning products out of reach of children. Know the Poison Center number! 1-800-222-1222.
- Use a range hood fan or other exhaust fan. The best fans vent outside.
- Maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.



## Healthy Drinking Water

U.S. EPA sets standards that ensure safe drinking water from public water sources. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Division of Water Supply oversees drinking water safety. It trains and inspects the operators that clean drinking water for water utilities. Water utilities are required to inspect water for infectious pathogens, chemical contaminants, and disinfectant products on a regular basis. By law, you are to be notified if your public drinking water source fails safety testing.

Metal water pipes may weaken over time. Let the cold water run for two to three minutes when using tap water the first time each day. This will flush out lead or copper that may have settled over time. Do not use hot water for drinking, cooking, or making formula. Metals are more likely to dissolve into hot water. It is better to run cold water and then heat it on the stove or in the microwave. For information on how to test your home's water, call an approved laboratory.

In rural areas, about 95% of people drink water from a private source such as a well or spring. If you get your water from a well, make sure it is clean and safe to drink. Have your water tested for bacteria, viruses, and pollutants. Making sure it is clean and safe to drink is the responsibility of the well owner.

# LIVING ROOM

## Health and Safety Tips

- Keep your home smoke-free.
- Vacuum carpets and floors frequently.
- Protect your children from lead-based paint.
- Move blind cords out of the reach of children.
- Inspect chimneys, gas-burning furnaces, or fireplaces yearly.



## Keep it Clean – Air Filters

One of the Healthy Homes principles is to keep your home clean and free of clutter. Sweeping, mopping, and dusting are all important ways to keep your home clean. Inspect and change your Heating, Ventilation, and Cooling system's (HVAC) air filter on a regular basis. Use a good quality pleated air filter to remove dust from the air your family breathes. Vacuum or wipe vent louvers and ceiling fans to remove dust. Maintaining good indoor air quality is especially important if a family member has a medical condition such as asthma, allergies, emphysema, or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

## Pet Allergens

Some people are allergic to dogs, cats, or birds. Pet allergies are caused by dander (dead skin that is shed), saliva, and urine. To help with pet allergies:

- Do not allow children with asthma or pet allergies to rub their faces in a pet's fur.
- Have children wash their hands after touching pets.
- Keep pet areas clean.

## Pesticides

Pesticides can be beneficial when used in the proper amount and in the correct manner. Pesticides can be used to control many pests. Overuse or misuse of pesticides can be very damaging to your health, wildlife, or the environment. Many pesticides are poisonous if accidentally ingested and can irritate the skin of people or pets. Be sure to follow the directions on pesticide labels. Use boric acid powder instead to control ants and cockroaches.



# BEDROOM

## Health and Safety Tips

- Maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Wash sheets and blankets in hot water to reduce asthma triggers.
- Use mattress and pillow covers.
- Vacuum often.



## Dust Mites

Dust mites are tiny bugs that are too small to see. Dust mites live in things like sheets, blankets, pillows, mattresses, soft furniture, carpets and stuffed toys. To fight dust mites: wash bedding in hot water once a week, dry completely, use dust proof covers on pillows and mattresses, vacuum carpets and furniture every week. Choose stuffed toys you can wash. Periodically wash toys in hot water and dry completely before your child plays with them.

## Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are not as common as other pests. The adult bed bug is about a ¼ inch long and reddish brown. Young nymph bed bugs are smaller and light-colored. Bed bugs are flat, allowing them fit in small cracks and crevices. Bed bugs usually bite at night. Bed bugs can be accidentally transported in luggage, clothing, beds, furniture, and other items. Be especially cautious with used or rented beds, bedding, furniture, and other items that may harbor bed bugs. Inspect them before bringing them into your home. It can be helpful to use mattress covers on your bed. Avoid having clutter under or around your bed. Contact your doctor if you have an allergic reaction to bug bites.

## Gun Safety

- If you have a gun in the home, make sure it is unloaded.
- Use a trigger lock and keep it locked away.
- Bullets should be locked away from the gun.
- Teach children that guns can kill people, and that guns are not toys.
- Do not clean a gun with others in the room.
- Never point a gun at a person.
- Take a gun safety class.

# BATHROOM

## Health and Safety Tips

- Wash hands to prevent the spread of many illnesses.
- Supervise young children in bathtubs.
- Check water temperature before putting young children into the bathtub.
- Know if your water comes from a private well. If so, test it for contaminants.



## Proper Disposal of Unwanted Medications

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has partnered with local law enforcement and solid waste officials across Tennessee to develop ways to take back unwanted medicines. There are permanent collection sites and temporary collection events capable of accepting and properly disposing of unwanted pharmaceuticals. For more information, call 615-253-8780.

## Lead in Bathtubs

Some bathtubs can contain lead. Cast iron or steel tubs can have a porcelain or enamel coating. As the coating wears down from age and use, the lead can leach into bath water. Young children who drink bath water or put their wet hands or toys in their mouths during bath time are at greatest risk.

## Mold and Moisture

Moisture is common in the bathroom. Water can leak from pipes under the sink, behind the toilet or between the walls. Water vapor steams from hot baths and showers. Mold and mildew can grow quickly with moisture. Soap and water, store-bought cleaners and scrub brushes can all be helpful in controlling mold. The best way to not have mold in the bathroom is follow the healthy homes principle to “keep it dry.”

Using a fan that exhausts to the outside reduces humidity in the bathroom. Mopping up spills and quickly repairing any leaks will help to keep your bathroom clean of mold and mildew. If water damages hard surfaces such as tile, porcelain, or countertop, dry it thoroughly. If water soaks into carpet, carpet pad, drywall, plaster or other materials, these porous materials usually need to be replaced.

# NURSERY

## Health and Safety Tips

- Use electrical outlet covers and safety plugs to prevent objects from being pushed into outlets.
- Always supervise your child while bathing; stay within arm's reach of the child at all times.
- When using a changing table, keep one hand on your baby at all times. Table should be sanitized after each use.
- Maintain smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Change batteries as recommended by manufacturer.
- Avoid products containing the chemical Bisphenol A (BPA).
- Maintain a smoke-free zone around your baby.
- If remodeling the nursery, protect your children from lead-based paint.
- Ensure your baby travels in a proper child safety seat at all times.
- Never leave a child unattended, especially in a car, not even for a short time.
- Use baby gates and door barriers across kitchen and bathroom doors and staircase openings.
- Store medicines and cleaning products out of reach and in lockable cupboards.
- To prevent choking, choose age-appropriate toys with no small parts that could be a choking hazard.



## Lead

Lead is a metal used in some paints. Lead is most harmful to young children. Even a few small dust particles of lead can cause poisoning in a child. Lead poisoning can slow a child's ability to learn and cause behavior problems. Lead paint is most common in houses built before 1978. Children are in danger when they can reach items painted with lead-based paint such as toys, windows, doors, stairs, porches, siding, or fences.

Lead gets into the body by breathing or swallowing it. Lead can be in dust, soil, or paint. Young children can come into contact with lead as they crawl indoors or outdoors. Lead dust can be on their hands and anything else they put in their mouths.



- Test children less than six years of age for lead.
- Wash children's hands before they eat and sleep. Keep play areas and toys clean. Keep children from chewing on window trim and other painted surfaces.
- Make sure children eat foods that reduce the effects of lead. Dairy products and leafy green vegetables are rich in calcium. Fortified cereals, beans and red meat are high in iron.
- Lead can also be harmful to adults. It can cause high blood pressure, digestion problems, reproduction problems, nerve disorders, memory problems and muscle and joint pain.

There are some things you can do now to protect your family. Clean up paint chips. They are mostly found on windows, porches, floors and doors. Wet dust and mop at least once a week to remove lead dust.

If your home was built before 1978, test your home for lead paint. Removing lead paint without training can be dangerous for you and your family. Consider hiring a licensed company with lead-safe workplace training. To find people to test and remove lead paint, call the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Lead Hazard Program at 1-888-771-5323.

### **Carbon Monoxide Safety**

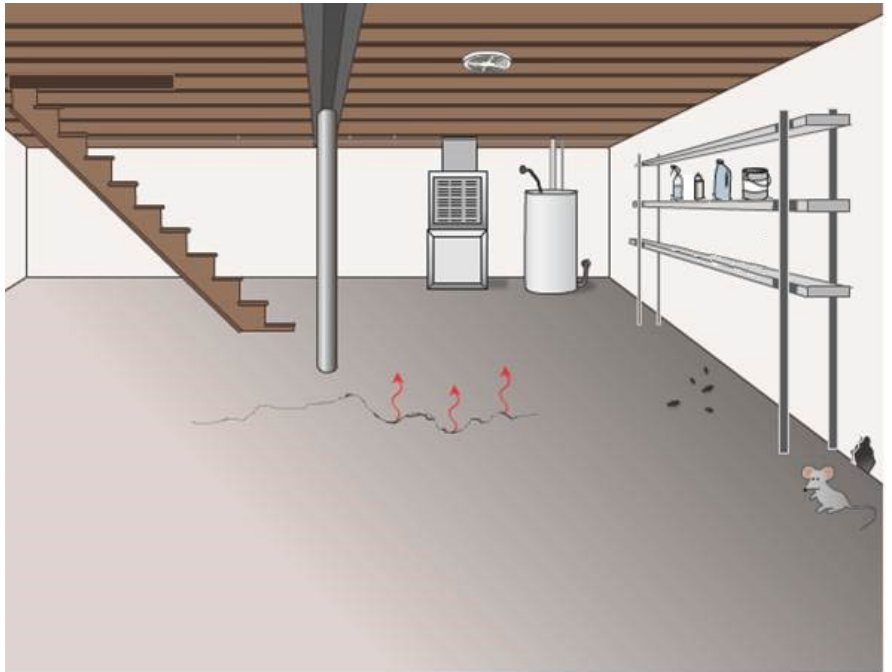
Carbon monoxide (CO) has no odor, no color, and is toxic. You cannot see it, taste it, or smell it. It comes from burning fuel like gasoline, diesel, natural gas, wood, charcoal, or kerosene. Your furnace, stove, water heater or fireplace might give off carbon monoxide. Cars and generators produce carbon monoxide when the motor is running. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, nausea, dizziness, or feeling tired. Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to unconsciousness or death.

- If you have any gas appliances, use kerosene heaters, or have a garage attached to your home, install a carbon monoxide detector. If the alarm goes off, get outside, and call the fire department or gas company.
- If you think that you have been poisoned by carbon monoxide, leave the building, and call 911 immediately.
- Never leave a car or lawn mower running in the garage.
- Never use generators, kerosene or propane heaters, charcoal or gas grills, or fuel-powered machines indoors.
- Never use a gas stove to heat your home.
- Have chimneys, water heaters, gas-burning furnaces and fireplaces checked periodically by a professional.

# BASEMENT

## Health and Safety Tips

- Test your home for radon.
- Keep the basement dry.
- Inspect gas appliances annually for leaks and proper performance.
- Vent clothes dryers, gas heaters and other appliances to the outdoors.
- Maintain smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Store pesticides and chemicals out of reach of children.
- Seal holes and gaps in floors and walls.
- Clean up clutter.
- Prevent falls by installing hand rails in stairways.
- Keep cleaning supplies out of reach of children.



## Controlling a Damp Basement

Basements are often used as extensions of indoor living space or for storage. Moisture levels in the basement or crawlspace should be maintained like other parts of the home. If your basement air feels damp, measure the humidity. If the humidity is often above 50 percent relative humidity, you probably need to reduce moisture. Consider using a dehumidifier. If water collects on your basement floor or seeps through the basement walls, you probably need to do more home maintenance. Basement floors and walls can be sealed to prevent moisture. Keep rainwater away from basement and foundation walls. To keep water away from your home, you might need to slope landscaping, bury a French drain, or install a sump pump. Contacting a reputable professional is recommended to discuss options for your specific situation.

## Pesticide safety

Before using any pesticide, read the pesticide label and become familiar with all precautions, including first aid instructions. Be sure to only use pesticides designed for indoor use. Do not use pesticides inside the home that are made for outdoor use.

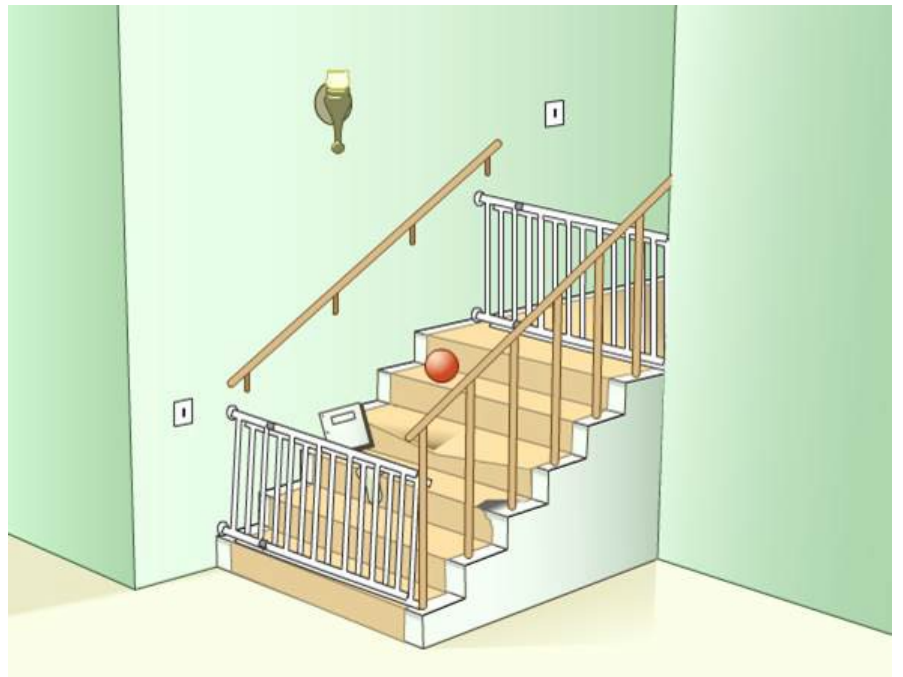
## Hot Water Heater Safety

The hot water heater thermostat should be set at 120°F or lower to prevent burns from scalding.

# STAIRS

## Prevent Fall Injuries:

- Install hand rails in stairways.
- Have good lighting for stairs.
- Keep stairs free of clutter and in good repair.
- Protect young children by using safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.



For child safety, spindles on stair rails should be no more than 3 ½" apart. If children are under age 2, the spacing should be less than 2 ¾". For railing that cannot be easily modified, install banister guards or rail nets.

Each year, one in three adults, age 65 and older falls. Falls can cause moderate to severe injuries, such as hip fractures and head traumas, and can increase the risk of early death.

Use fluorescent or LED lighting to illuminate stairs and prevent falls. Fluorescent bulbs are four to six times more energy efficient and usually last much longer than incandescent lamps. LED lights are both energy efficient and long lasting.

## Secondhand Smoke

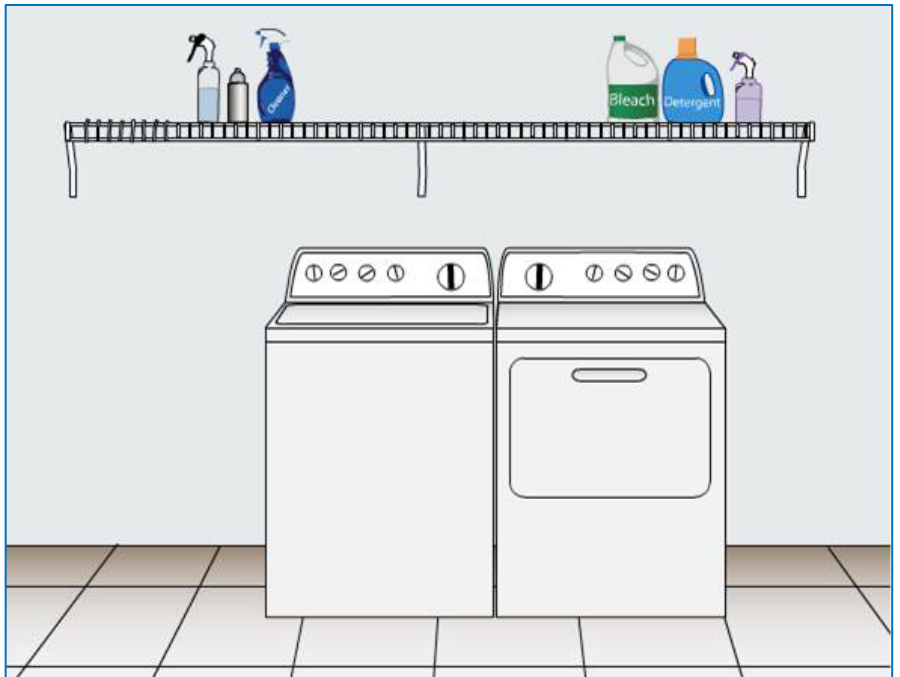
Secondhand smoke is a known health hazard. Breathing in secondhand smoke can lead to serious health problems such as asthma or respiratory tract infections. Sadly, the home is the place where children are the most exposed to secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke exposure in the home has been consistently linked to a significant increase in both heart disease and lung cancer risk among adult nonsmokers. To stop smoking, call the Tennessee Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-784-8669.

# LAUNDRY ROOM

## Health and Safety Tips

- Vent the clothes dryer outside the home to prevent mold inside.
- Clean lint from dryer vent pipe to prevent fire.
- Keep cleaning supplies out of reach of children.
- Wash sheets and blankets in hot water to reduce allergens, such as dust mites.
- If you have a gas dryer or water heater, install a carbon monoxide detector.
- Have gas appliances and furnaces checked regularly to make sure they are working properly and are vented to the outside.



## Natural Gas

Natural gas is a colorless, odorless, combustible mixture of hydrocarbon gases. There are several ways to detect a natural gas leak. The best indicator of a natural gas leak is an odor similar to rotten eggs. You can also look for dirt blowing into the air, persistent bubbling in standing water or discolored or dead vegetation around a natural gas pipeline area. An unusual hissing or roaring sound can indicate a potential gas leak.

If you suspect a gas leak, act quickly! Make sure gas appliances are turned all the way OFF. Immediately have everyone leave the house. Call 911 from a neighbor's house. Keep everyone away from the building until given the "all clear" from a gas company employee or other authority. Do not strike matches or create a flame or spark that could ignite the gas. Do not start an engine of any kind. Do not use a telephone or cell phone in the area. Do not flip on or off light switches, garage door openers or other electronics. Do not try to find the source of the natural gas leak yourself.

Remember, gas appliances should have proper air circulation at all times. A gas flame should burn bright blue. A yellow or orange flame could indicate improper combustion or venting. Keep flammable or combustible items away from gas appliances and equipment. Use gas equipment only for what it was designed to do. For example, DO NOT use a stove or range for heating a cold home.

# GARAGE

## Health and Safety Tips

- Never run power equipment inside an enclosed garage.
- Do not idle cars or trucks inside the garage.
- Do not use fuel heaters or generators indoors.
- Keep pesticides and other chemicals out of reach of children.
- Reduce pesticide use by adopting Integrated Pest Management practices to control pests. Properly dispose of your used motor oil, antifreeze, and other automotive wastes.
- Consider cool roofs, such as green planted roofs or white reflective roofs, when building a new home or replacing an existing roof to reduce the temperature in your garage.
- Insulate your water heater and turn down the thermostat to 120°F.



## Proper Disposal of Household Hazardous Waste

Household hazardous waste is any unwanted or spent household product that can catch fire easily (flammable), eat away or irritate living tissue (corrosive), react violently with water or other chemicals (reactive), or is poisonous to humans and animals (toxic).

The average home in Tennessee produces 20 pounds of household hazardous waste each year. Typical items to dispose of include cleaning fluids, pesticides, mercury thermometers and thermostats, swimming pool chemicals, paint thinner and automotive fluids. Some items that are accepted but may be recycled locally and on a year-round basis are used oil, batteries, used antifreeze, propane cylinders, and compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs. Many of these items are commodities and may generate revenue for the local collection site. For more information about proper disposal in Tennessee call 615-532-9265.



# ATTIC

## Health and Safety Tips

- Seal gaps around roofing, attic spaces, windows and doors to prevent rodents and insects from entering the house.
- Clean up clutter to prevent rodents and insects from finding places to nest.
- Ventilate the attic.
- Repair roof leaks promptly.
- Keep attic stairs in good repair and free of clutter.
- Be careful of exposed rafters, nails, or electrical wiring.
- If the attic is not completely floored, be careful to step on joists and not between them.
- Older insulation may contain asbestos. If insulation must be removed or disturbed, hire an expert.



## Pests

Many people are allergic to cockroaches. Cockroaches can trigger asthma attacks. Mice and rats can bring disease to people. Get rid of these pests. To help avoid them:

- Keep food in hard, closed containers. Clean up food crumbs and wash food off dishes right away.
- Use a trash can with a lid. Regularly remove the trash from the house.
- Make sure there are no water puddles inside the home. Cockroaches, mice, and rats need water to live. Fix water leaks right away.
- Do not leave pet food or water out overnight. Store extra pet food in sealed containers.
- Use traps or sticky pads to kill insects and rodents instead of pesticide sprays or poisons.

## Asbestos

Asbestos was a popular fire protection component in commercial products from the early 1900s to the 1970s. Asbestos may have been used in construction materials such as: sprayed-on or textured ceilings, floor tiles, tile glue, roofing felts and shingles, building sheathing, ceiling tiles, and drywall or joint compounds. Intact and undisturbed asbestos-containing material usually does not pose a health risk. If asbestos fibers get in the air because of damage, disturbance or deterioration, asbestos is an inhalation hazard. Call 1-888-891-TDEC (8332) for more information.

# YARD

## Health and Safety Tips

- Direct rain water away from home using gutters and downspouts.
- Keep porches, stairs, walks and driveways in good repair and well lit.
- Wear proper eye and ear protection when using power tools.
- Remove old tires and standing water that could allow mosquitoes to breed.
- Remove litter, tall grass, and brush to eliminate nesting areas for unwanted pests and to reduce insects and rodents.
- Avoid wood chip mulch near the house as termites eat wood.
- Always be mindful when children are playing in the area.



## Septic Systems

If you live in an urban area or in the suburbs, when you flush your toilet, the waste travels through underground piping to the sanitary sewer system. The waste is treated at a water treatment plant. If you live in a rural area, a treatment plant is not likely accessible. When you flush your toilet, the waste likely goes into a septic tank and eventually into a drain field in your yard.

The drain field delivers wastewater to the underlying soil. The soil acts as a filter to purify the wastewater before it reaches the groundwater or any adjacent surface waters. If you want to install a septic system at your home, you need a permit. Permits can be granted by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (1-888-891-8332).

If you have a septic system, it must be properly maintained to prevent overloading and overflows. **The general recommendation is to have your septic tank pumped out about every five years.** If sewage backs up into your home, then you, your family and pets should avoid contact with it. Clean up the mess when you have proper protection for your eyes, face, clothing, and hands.

## Call 811 Before You Dig!

Before performing any type of home improvement project that requires digging, find out where your underground utility lines are located. Be sure to call 811 before you perform any digging.

## **Mosquitoes**

Mosquitoes can be a nuisance when enjoying outdoor activities. They can also spread many illnesses that negatively impact people including West Nile Virus, Chikungunya and Zika virus.

Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and at dawn. Be more vigilant during outdoor activities at these times. Windy conditions make it difficult for mosquitoes to move around and locate their prey. People give off carbon dioxide which attracts mosquitoes. Fans can be helpful in deterring mosquitoes. Wearing light-colored, loose fitting, clothes with long pants and sleeves can help protect you when you are outside.

Mosquitoes can bite through tight fitting clothes. If you choose to use an insect repellent, be sure that it is an EPA-registered repellent and “USE ONLY AS DIRECTED” on the package.

The most efficient method of controlling mosquitoes is by reducing the availability of water suitable for reproduction and growth. Large lakes, ponds, and streams that have waves, contain mosquito-eating fish, and lack aquatic vegetation around their edges do not contain mosquitoes; mosquitoes thrive in smaller bodies of water in protected places. Standing water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Even small amounts of water, like in the base of a flower pot, are enough for mosquitoes to become biting adults. Clean up around your homes, yards and communities and discard unnecessary items that can hold water. Remove standing water in rain gutters, old tires, buckets, plastic covers, toys, or any other container where mosquitoes can breed. Following a rain event, TIP n’ TOSS any water standing in containers near your home.

### **“TIP n’ TOSS”**

Make sure drain pipes slope downward and away from your home. Keep windows and doors shut and use air conditioning when possible. Install or repair and use window and door screens.

### **Water + 7 days = Mosquitoes**

Bats eat 600-1,000 insects an hour. One bat can eat thousands of mosquitoes a night. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has more information on bats and building your own bat house.

# POOL

## Health and Safety Tips

- Fence off pool and install a self-latching gate.
- Protect against water illnesses by keeping a clean pool.
- Watch young children around water.
- Teach children to swim.
- Teach children about water and pool safety.
- Use sunscreen.
- Learn CPR and keep lifesaving equipment by the pool.
- Don't use glass containers in the pool area.



## Pool Equipment

- Maintain pool and spa covers in good working order.
- Consider using a surface wave or underwater alarm.
- Ensure any pool and spa you use has compliant drains covers. Ask your pool service provider if you do not know.

## Avoid Recreational Water Illnesses

- Don't get into the water if you have diarrhea.
- Don't swallow water from pools, lakes, rivers, or other bodies of water.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Take children on frequent bathroom breaks. Check diapers often.
- Change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area, not at poolside.

## Proper Disposal of Unwanted Pool Chemicals

If you have unwanted pool supplies, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation conducts mobile household hazardous waste collection events throughout Tennessee each year. For more information about household hazardous waste collection in Tennessee call 615-532-9265.



# Home Maintenance Checklist

Spring	Fall	Basement / Crawl Space
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check for signs of mold, moisture, water damage, and leaks. Repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Look for signs of rats, bats, roaches, termites, squirrels, mice, and other pests. Seal openings to keep pests out. Treat as needed; you may want to hire a professional.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check that the sump pump and floor drain are working properly.
Spring	Fall	Exterior
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect all wood framing for signs of rats, bats, roaches, termites, squirrels, mice, and other pests. Contact a professional as needed to treat.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check exterior siding and trim for loose pieces and chipped or peeling paint. Repair and repaint as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check for and replace decaying or damaged trim/caulking around the windows and doors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect foundation and masonry for cracks. Hire a professional to repair as needed.
Spring	Fall	Yard
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear dead plants and shrubs away from the house. Trim tree branches that hang over the roof.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect fence and deck for problems that may lead to wood rot. Clean, repair, reseal and repaint as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check all garden hoses for leaks and repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drain all outdoor faucets and hoses. Cover to insulate faucets. Store the hoses for winter.
Spring	Fall	Windows & Walls
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check weather-stripping and caulking around windows and doors. Check for signs of leaks and repair or replace as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repair or replace cracked or broken windows.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean window wells usually found surrounding basement windows and check for proper drainage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check operation of windows and doors. Install screens, lubricate and repair as needed.



Spring	Fall	Roof & Attic
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean gutters and downspouts (may need to be done more frequently). Make sure they discharge water 2-3 feet away from the house.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check flashing around the chimney, plumbing vent, skylight, and other joints to ensure it is securely fastened; repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect the roof surface, shingles, eaves, and soffits; repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check that attic insulation is in place; add more where needed. Check roof vents to make sure they are free of debris and working properly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check for signs of leaks and repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect attic for signs of rodents, bats, roaches, termites, and other pests. Treat as needed; you may want to hire a professional.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check ductwork connections to make sure that fans exhaust to outdoors.
Spring	Fall	Appliances
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check bath and kitchen exhaust fans and clean the screens; repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean dehumidifier coils, check operation, and replace the filter.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean the refrigerator and freezer; wash door gasket, vacuum condenser coils, and empty drip pan. Check the door seal by closing it on a dollar bill. If you can easily remove the bill, then it is time to replace the gasket.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean washing machine water inlet filters; check hoses - replace if leaking.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacuum clothes dryer lint from ducts and surrounding areas. Clean the lint filter after each use.
Spring	Fall	Plumbing & Bathrooms
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check toilets and tanks for leaks; repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check and repair any faucet, tub, or shower leaks.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect the caulking and grout around toilets, tubs, showers and sinks; if caulking is damaged, scrape it out and re-caulk.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remove shower heads and faucet screens to clean sediment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check water-purification and water softener filters; change as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect water heater for leaks, corrosion, and proper operation (you may opt to have a plumber do this); inspect flue assembly for gas water heaters.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check water main/meter or well pump for leaks or sweating.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Test the water-heater pressure and temperature-relief valve for proper operation.
<b>every 3 - 7 years</b>		Hire a professional to pump your septic tank to prevent backup. This may need to be done more frequently if you have a garbage disposal.
<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Electrical</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check for frayed or damaged cords and wires. Check exposed wiring in basements and call an electrician if there are dangerous conditions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect indoor and outdoor outlets to ensure they are in safe, working condition. Contact a professional electrician if needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trip the circuit breakers and test ground fault interrupters to ensure proper protection; label switches if needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean all light fixtures, interior and exterior.
<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Heating &amp; Cooling</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace air filters (this may need to be done more frequently depending on your HVAC system).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dust off ceiling fan blades. Run the fan counterclockwise during summer and clockwise during winter.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hire a professional to tune-up the heating and cooling system.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cover or remove any window air-conditioning units and seal openings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspect the ductwork and vents; clean as needed.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check the fireplace damper and clean the chimney (you may opt to hire a professional to do this).
<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Garage</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check operation of the garage door safety shut-off.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Look for signs of rats, bats, roaches, termites, squirrels, mice and other pests. Seal openings to keep pests out. Contact a professional as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean your garage. Properly disposing of paint thinners, household cleaners and pesticides.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check for signs of water damage and leaks; repair as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have your lawnmower serviced.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Empty gasoline containers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean and store garden tools once fall yardwork is completed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repair cracks and gaps in driveways and walkways.
<b>Spring</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Safety</b>
<i>Monthly</i>		Check that your fire extinguisher is fully charged; recharge or replace as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change batteries in all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Update your home emergency plans in case of fire, tornado, etc. Be sure each family member knows their role and designated meeting place.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Review your home evacuation plan and ensure escape ladders are available and working.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If your drinking water comes from a private well, you should have it tested.
<i>Every 2 years</i>		Test your home for radon. Contact the Tennessee Radon Program for more information. 1-800-232-1139

Adapted from UGA Cooperative Extension Circular 1082 • Home Maintenance Checklist

**Good Health Begins at Home!  
Make Your Home a Healthy Home!**

**[tn.gov/healthyhomes](http://tn.gov/healthyhomes)**

# Are you Prepared?

Nearly half of U.S. adults do **NOT** have the resources and plans in place in the event of an emergency.

**48%** of Americans do **NOT** have emergency supplies.

Store at least a **3-day supply** of non perishable, easy to prepare food.

Store a **3-day supply** of water: one gallon per person, per day.

**44%** of Americans do **NOT** have first aid kits.

**20%** of Americans get emergency info from mobile apps. Keep a charger handy in an emergency.

**20%** of Americans use social media for alerts and warnings. Make sure to keep a charger handy in an emergency.

**52%** of Americans do **NOT** have copies of crucial personal documents.

Don't forget your pets! You need a **3-day supply** of food and water per pet.

**Prepare supplies for home, work, and vehicles. Emergencies can happen anywhere.**

# EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

An emergency kit is a collection of items that you may need in an emergency. Below are some items to help get you started.

- Water—one gallon per person, per day
- Food (enough to last 3 days)
- Flashlight
- Radio (NOAA Weather Radio, if possible)
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Medications
- Family and emergency contact information
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Cell phone with chargers
- Personal documents
- Extra cash
- Emergency blanket
- Maps
- Manual can opener



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

CS259306-B



# 8 TIPS TO CLEAN UP MOLD

-  **Protect Yourself**  
Put on personal protective equipment (gloves, mask, goggles) to protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin.
-  **Toss!**  
Take it out! Anything that was wet with flood water and can't be cleaned and dried completely within 24 to 48 hours should be taken outside. Take photos of discarded items for filing insurance claims.
-  **Air it out**  
Open all doors and windows when you are working, and leave as many open as you safely can when you leave.
-  **Circulate**  
When electricity is safe to use, use fans and dehumidifiers to remove moisture.
-  **Don't mix cleaners**  
If you use cleaning products, do not mix cleaning products together. DO NOT mix bleach and ammonia because it can create toxic vapors.
-  **Scrub surfaces**  
Clean with water and a detergent. Remove all mold you can see. Dry right away.
-  **Don't cover it, remove it**  
Painting or caulking over mold will not prevent mold from growing. Fix the water problem completely and clean up all the mold before you paint or caulk.
-  **Dry it up**  
Dry your home and everything in it as quickly as possible – within 24 to 48 hours if you can.

<http://www.cdc.gov/mold/cleanup.htm>



## TN.gov/healthyhomes



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