Seven Steps to a Healthier Home

A Clean Environment Begins Inside
Make your home a safe and healthy haven

Florence Nightingale said it best, “The connection between the health and the dwelling of the population is one of the most important that exists.” In the U.S. we spend 90% of our time indoors and a good percentage of that time is in our homes, which is why a “healthy home” is so important.

Whether you live in an old house, a new house, an apartment, a manufactured home, a townhouse, or a condo, your house impacts your health. A poorly maintained home can lead to a number of problems, including mold, roach infestations, lead paint poisoning, or trips and falls. Here are seven steps to making your home healthier and safer for you and your family.

Keep your home:

(1) DRY. Too much moisture leads to excessive mold growth and attracts pests like roaches, mice, rats, and dust mites. All of these are associated with asthma.

(2) CLEAN. Excess clutter, spills and debris lead to pest infestations.

(3) PEST-FREE. Studies show exposure of children to mice and roaches can cause asthma attacks. Seal cracks, reduce clutter and store food in sealed containers.

(4) SAFE. Falls, burns and poisonings are leading causes of injury in the home. Install smoke detectors, store products out of a child’s reach and secure loose rugs.

(5) CONTAMINANT-FREE. You are exposed to higher levels of contaminants indoors than outdoors. Don’t smoke indoors, use green cleaning products and test your home for radon.

(6) VENTILATED. Studies indicate ventilation impacts respiratory health. Use the kitchen fan when cooking, the bathroom fan when bathing and vent the dryer to the outside.

(7) MAINTAINED. A home that is not routinely cared for is at risk for tripping & falling hazards, mold, and pest problems. At least twice a year check your home for curb-appeal and make repairs before they become expensive problems.
Breast feeding is the Ideal Way to Nurture Your Baby

**A Special Website for a Special Love**

Breast feeding, while natural, is a learned behavior. Women do not instinctively know how to breast feed. In the past, women learned how to breast feeding from their mothers or other women. Now that may not happen. A new web site for African American women interested in breast feeding their babies has just come on-line from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is called “It’s Only Natural: Mother’s Love. Mother’s Milk.”.

This web site provides videos and information about the benefits of breast feeding for mothers and infants and tips on making breast feeding a natural part of nurturing a healthy baby. It covers common myths about breast feeding, how to plan during pregnancy for breast feeding, finding community support, fact sheets about how to successfully breast feed and even a leader’s guide for women who want to host a breast feeding education session for expectant African American mothers.

If you are interested in visiting this site and learning more about what it offers, go to [http://www.womenshealth.gov/It'sOnlyNatural/index.html](http://www.womenshealth.gov/It'sOnlyNatural/index.html)

**Achieving Zero Alcohol Impaired Crashes**

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is advocating for stricter blood alcohol levels to prevent alcohol-related traffic accidents. Currently if a driver has a blood alcohol level of .08, they are considered too impaired to drive and subject to arrest for DWI. At .05, people start to have problems with their vision and their risk for an accident increases 39% compared to a risk of 100% at .08.

The NTSB also wants people convicted of DWI to have ignition interlocks to prevent them from starting their cars if they are drunk, special DWI courts to prosecute offenders, more visible enforcement like sobriety checkpoints and passive alcohol sensors that detect alcohol in the environment without the person having to blow into a breathalyzer.