


# HIDDEN HOME THREATS

According to a recent national survey, the majority of homeowners are concerned about environmental hazards in their homes. Check out these common hot spots for hidden home threats and simple steps for protecting you and your family.



**Carbon Monoxide kills.**  
This colorless, odorless, tasteless gas sends up to 40,000 to the emergency room and kills 500 people in the U.S. each year, beginning with flu- or allergy-like symptoms.

**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Ventilate and monitor to breathe safely!**

- Inspect hot water heaters, stoves and chimneys each year to ensure they are properly functioning.
- Put Carbon Monoxide detectors near sleeping areas and on each floor.

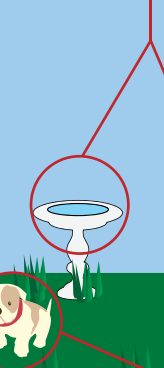


**Mosquitoes are menaces.**  
They need only a thimble-full of water to breed and survive and can transmit West Nile virus.


**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Remove water and reclaim your yard!**

- Remove water from gutters and flower pots. Regularly change water in bird baths and wading pools.
- Clean gutters regularly and point downspouts away from home.
- When outdoors, wear repellent with DEET according to label instructions.
- Hire a pest control professional who practices Integrated Pest Management\* to control mosquitoes or other yard pests.



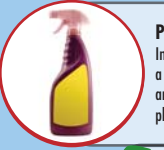
**Tiny ticks spread dangerous diseases.**  
Ticks feed on our blood (and that of our pets) and can transmit diseases like Lyme and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.



**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Check yourself to protect yourself!**

- Carefully check your body (and those of your children and pets) promptly after being outdoors.
- When outdoors, wear repellent with DEET according to label instructions.
- Cut shrubbery and mow grass regularly.
- If found, use fine-tipped tweezers to remove ticks below the head. Contact a physician if signs of an infection (fever or rash) appear.

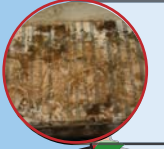


**Poisoning is prevalent.**  
Injuries in the home, such as poisonings, hurt more than six and a half million people each year. Yet many household cleaners and chemicals are often stored in unlocked or easily accessible places.

**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Practice safe storage!**

- Store all products in their original containers.
- Install child locks on cabinets in homes with young children.
- Promptly store products after use and wipe up spills immediately.
- Keep harmful products away from food to avoid mistaken consumption.
- In an emergency, call the poison control hotline (1-800-222-1222).




**A moldy home is an unhealthy home.**  
Mold grows on moist surfaces and can cause allergic reactions including watery eyes, runny nose and trouble breathing. Mold can also trigger asthma attacks.

**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Remove moisture to rid mold!**

- Fix water problems as soon as possible.
- Install fans in bathrooms that vent outside.
- When cleaning mold, use detergent and water, and wear a face mask, long sleeves, pants and gloves.



**Rodents are relentless.**  
Rats and mice can squeeze through holes the size of quarters or dimes. Rodents (and the fleas they carry) can contaminate food and transmit harmful diseases.

**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Eliminate entry points!**

- Seal or repair cracks in siding, faulty door/window screens and gaps around pipes entering the home.
- Trim branches, plants and bushes away from your home.
- If you spot a rodent, hire a professional pest control provider who practices Integrated Pest Management\* immediately.

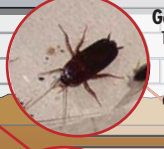


**Lead poisons children.**  
This dangerous metal can be found in peeling paint and dust around your home — especially homes built before 1978. Lead can also be found in the soil around your home.


**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Protect against contaminated paint and dust!**

- Hire a professional to inspect homes built before 1978.
- Wash children's hands and toys frequently.
- Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to remove lead dust.
- Cover bare soil with grass and plants.
- Place a rubber-backed door mat outside and inside your front door to keep contaminants out.



**Got crumbs? Get cockroaches.**  
They want what we've got — food, water and shelter. These pests can contaminate food and make you sick, as well as trigger asthma attacks.



**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Radon is radioactive.**  
This naturally occurring, odorless, colorless gas is found at high levels in one out of every 15 homes and is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking.

**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Clean up and keep them out!**

- Clean counters and dishes, and tightly seal leftovers.
- Rinse recyclable containers before storing.
- Pick up and store pet food overnight.
- Empty garbage and vacuum frequently.
- Seal cracks and crevices.

**SIMPLE STEPS**

**Test for and seal out radon!**

- Purchase a \$10 radon test kit from the hardware store.
- Stop smoking, as it intensifies radon's effects on your health.
- Seal cracks in floors and walls.
- If radon is detected, hire a professional to install a radon mitigation system.

For more information, please visit these web sites:

- [www.Orkin.com/learningcenter](http://www.Orkin.com/learningcenter)
- [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov)
- [www.CenterforHealthyHousing.org](http://www.CenterforHealthyHousing.org)

\* **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** is an approach to pest control that combines all available methods of pest prevention in a given environment and uses pesticides only when necessary to achieve acceptable levels of control with the least possible harm to humans, non-target organisms and the environment.