

Healthy Indoor Environments

Where We Live, Learn and Play

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Is Your Child One of the 535,000 Who Is At Risk?

Written by Christa Campbell



Georgia Healthy Housing
one change many impacts

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Did you know that home repairs that create even a small amount of lead dust can harm your children?

There are major health effects, especially for children six years old and under, associated with exposure to high amounts of lead.



Peeling Lead Paint. Image Source: Pamela Turner

Children can suffer from brain damage, slowed growth, headaches, behavior and learning problems. According to the Center for Disease Control, 535,000 U S children ages 1 to 5 years have blood lead levels

high enough to damage their health. Lead is a toxic metal that was used for many years in products in or around our homes; more specifically, it can be found in paint used in homes and apartments that were built before 1978. Therefore, it is important when doing home repairs to hire a Lead-Safe Certified contractor or take extra precautions to work lead safe.



Image Source: Pixabay

To find a Lead-Safe Certified contractor call 800-424-

LEAD (5323) or visit epa.gov/lead. If you decide to do the work yourself then visit <https://www.epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program-do-it-yourselfers> to be sure you are taking all the necessary precautions to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Healthy Home Hacks

Eliminating odors in the home: Pour white vinegar on a hand towel, then wring it out. Walk through your house waving the towel in the air, like you are rooting for the Dawgs! This will eliminate any lingering unpleasant odors without using chemicals. ~ Keishon Thomas

Frost on your car windows can be removed with rubbing alcohol. Fill a spray bottle with rubbing alcohol, spritz the window and the frost comes right off! ~ Ines Beltran

Microfiber products are made of small fibers that have the ability to trap dusts and absorb spills. To protect them, don't treat them with fabric softener. ~ Pamela Turner

Poison Prevention: Taking Action for a Healthier Home

Written by Carin Booth

If you take a look around your home, you are sure to find household items used for a variety of purposes. There are cleaners, detergents, disinfectants, and medications, to name just a few. Caring for your home and family requires the use of many of these products, most of which are generally regarded as safe. However, incorrect use or storage can result in accidental poisoning. Both adults and children may be poisoned.

Poisons are substances that are capable of causing illness or death when absorbed. Unfortunately, poisons continue to be the leading cause of injury and death in the United States. Many of these occurrences are the result of misuse and mishandling of potentially poisonous substances.

“One of the best things you can do for your family is educate.”

According to the Georgia Poison Center, forty-five percent of calls made to the poison control center hotline are in regards to children 6 years of age or less. The number two leading cause of accidental poisons is household

cleaning products, with analgesics like Motrin or Tylenol taking first place.

With the danger of poisoning right in our own homes, what can we do to combat this issue?

One of the best things you can do for your family is to educate them. Poisons can affect adults and children alike so take time to teach about poison look-alikes in your home. A poison look-alike is a potentially harmful substance that can be easily mistaken for a safe one.



Image Source: Pixabay

This occurs because of similar packaging or color-

ing. For instance, have you ever noticed similarities in blue sports drinks and window cleaner? Or, how close in color and texture powdered cleanses are to parmesan cheese?

You can also help alleviate this problem in your home by storing food separately from household cleaners and medicines. Keep your pantry and cleaning products organized and in their original containers. Store chemicals in a way that will prevent a common mix-up between poison containers and food containers.

While the danger of poisons is prevalent in children, adults are just as likely to experience issues. For adults with low vision or older adults, consider asking the pharmacist for large print medicine labels to ensure you are taking the correct medicine and dosage.



Ibuprofen and Tic Tak candy.
Image Source: Emily Reynolds

It is also important to read the label of any product you are using to see if the ingredients are safe in your home. Try using multipurpose products to reduce the amount of potentially harmful products you have in your home. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension website has recipes for green cleaning and pesticide products that can provide peace of mind when cleaning around your home.

After becoming familiar with products in your home, take caution and use products exactly as the directions state. Follow the instructions on the label to reduce the risk of accidental poisoning.

If you happen to come in contact with poisons, contact the Poison control Center immediately! In fact, it is best to contact the Poison Help Line (1-800-222-1222) before calling 911 in emergencies that involve poisoning. The helpline is not just for emergencies and should be used as a resource any time you need information or have questions on poisons.

Energy Saving Tips

Written by Keishon Thomas

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, about 46% of your utility bill goes to pay for heating and cooling your home. Yikes! It's time to save money. Follow these tips to save energy and maintain your comfort.

- Have your heating and cooling system inspected by a qualified heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) professional. Routine maintenance ensures your unit is safe, working effectively and efficiently.
- Install a programmable thermostat. A programmable thermostat allows you to automatically adjust the temperature in your home. You can store and repeat multiple daily settings.
- The second largest area of energy consumption in the home is lighting, household appliances and electronics. The Berkley National Lab estimates that in most homes there are at least 40 household devices drawing power. Just looking in one room in my own home and I know they are right. Reduce your use by:

- Unplugging electronic devices when they aren't in use. Most new electronics use electricity even when switched "off".
- Curbing idle time in devices such as computers and video game consoles. Set your computer and sleep mode or save games and power down rather than pausing

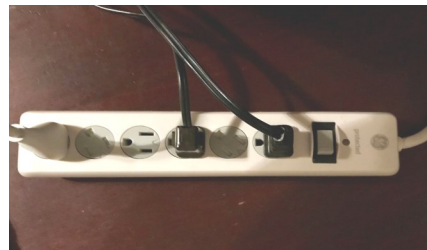


Image Source: Pamela Turner

- Using power strips. Power strips allow you to power completely on and off. This will allow you to control the power usage of clusters of devices so that they're not consuming electricity when not in use.



Surge Protector On
Image Source: Pamela Turner



Surge Protector Off
Image Source: Pamela Turner

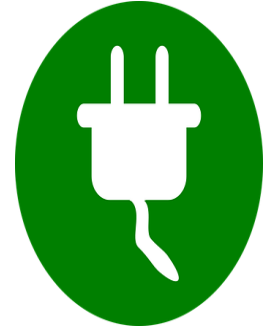


Image Source: Pixabay

“The second largest area of energy consumption in the home is lighting, household appliances and electronics”

Keep Warm, But Stay Safe!

Written by Rebecca Stackhouse

Picture curling up in front of a cozy fireplace and enjoying a hot drink. Stop! Don't do that before you have your fireplace inspected. There are some house-keeping and safety measures you need to follow before that first chilly night when you toss a log on the fire. Each year, you should have your chimney inspected by a professional. Clean out the creosol and ashes to avoid a smoky mess or a house fire. Burn the right materials and use seasoned hard wood. Burning cardboard, trash or debris can cause problems inside a home.

A fire can get out of control as a result of burning debris. Sparks can fly into the room or toxic smoke could filter throughout your home. A screen can offer protection and could keep sparks and embers in their place, but it's best to burn only wood. Never leave a fire unattended. With the proper care and use of a fireplace you can enjoy the season with common sense throughout the colder months.



Image source: Pamela Turner

Helpful Hints for Healthy Indoor Environments

Hint 1: Choosing Safer Thrift-Store Toys

The thrift store can be a great place to find bargains, but make your holidays happier by shopping carefully. Choose toys that fit your child's age, ability, and interests. Check toys for sharp edges, loose parts, or missing pieces. Make sure buttons and trims are tightly attached so children cannot pull them off. Toys with small parts can be a choking hazard, especially for children under age 3. Lead paint is not allowed in children's toys, but be aware that older plastic or painted toys in thrift stores may contain lead. Check out the Consumer Product Safety Commission's tips for toy safety at <http://bit.ly/CPSCToySafety>. ~ Diane Bales, Human Development Extension Specialist

Hint 2: Giving Bicycle Helmets for the Holidays

That shiny new bicycle may be the perfect holiday gift. Make sure children are safe using it by adding a shiny new helmet. Choose the right size helmet for your child's age and head size, and take time to adjust it to fit your child's head properly. Replace helmets and pads every five years, whenever children outgrow them, or whenever they are in a crash or the foam is dented. Teach children to always wear helmets when riding. Learn more about bicycle safety from Safe Kids Worldwide at <http://bit.ly/SafeonWheels>. ~ Diane Bales, Human Development Extension Specialist



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