Healthy Homes Training

CONTAMINANTS
Why Parents Should Worry about Contaminants

- Contaminants produce fumes harmful to a child’s health.
- Some contaminants can cause allergies, skin rashes and asthma attacks.
- Reducing use of household cleaning chemicals is one way to reduce illness in children.
Asthma & Allergy Triggers

- Mold
- Pests/Pesticides
- Household cleaning products
- Dust
- Pollen
- Dander from pets
- Cigarette smoke
- Personal care products
How Safe IS Your Home?

Common contaminants that can be dangerous:

- Bleach
- Glues
- Rat and mouse poison
- Mothballs
- Lighter fluid
- Air fresheners
- Oven Cleaner
- Batteries
- Gas
- Tobacco Smoke
- Oil
- Wood polish
- Toilet and drain cleaners
- Shoe polish
- Pesticides
- Ammonia
- Lead
- Carbon Monoxide
- And many others
Presentation Goals

- Learn what harmful contaminants may be in your home.
- Identify words that indicate potential hazard.
- Learn safe cleaning practices that do not involve contaminants.
- Know where carbon monoxide exists in homes.
- Learn importance of a blood test for lead.
7 Principles of Healthy Homes

1. Keep it **CONTAMINANT-FREE**
2. Keep it **CLEAN**
3. Keep it **DRY**
4. Keep it **PEST-FREE**
5. Keep it **SAFE**
6. Keep it **MAINTAINED**
7. Keep it **VENTILATED**
When Household Chemicals Become Hazardous

• Children can be poisoned by breathing in or drinking products that are not used, stored or thrown away safely.

• Combining cleaning products can create harmful vapors.

• Chemicals used in a non-ventilated area are hazardous.
Exposure To Contaminants

• **Some household chemicals can cause:**
  - Nausea
  - Dizziness
  - Itching or burning skin
  - Sore or watery eyes

• **Long-term problems:**
  - Cancer and lung damage can occur later in life
Carbon Monoxide (CO) can come from:
- cigarette smoke,
- wood burning fireplaces/stoves,
- ovens,
- clothes dryers, and
- kerosene heaters.

• You can’t see or smell CO.
• Signs of CO poisoning are mistaken for the flu.
• People who survive CO poisoning can suffer brain damage, lose their sight or hearing, or have heart problems.
Preventing CO Exposure

• Do not breathe in the fumes from anything burning.
• Do not smoke in your home.
• Install CO alarms near every sleeping area.
Lead

• Lead is mainly found today in homes built before 1978:
  - Lead-based paint
  - Lead solder/lead pipes
• Children can get poisoned by inhaling or swallowing lead dust.
• Lead can cause brain damage, behavior problems, short attention spans and lower intelligence levels.
Preventing Lead Exposure

- Homes built before 1978 should be tested for lead.
  - If you do not know when your home was built or you need help, contact your local health department.
- Have your child tested for lead poisoning at age 1 and 2; or before age 6 if child was never tested.
Preventing Lead Exposure

- Give your children foods high in:
  - Calcium (cheese, milk)
  - Vitamin C (citrus fruit)
  - Iron (black beans, beef or peanut butter)

- Wash hands often

These foods help prevent lead poisoning
• Bleach should be diluted. Do not use full strength.
• Using more bleach than needed produces dangerous fumes.
• The correct mix of bleach to water is: ¼ cup of bleach to 4 cups of water
• Never mix bleach with anything other than water.

Using bleach full strength can cause allergy and asthma attacks in children.
Air Fresheners

- Air fresheners cause allergies and other breathing problems in children.
- Examples of air fresheners are:
  - Scented sprays
  - Scented candles
  - Plug-in air fresheners
  - Scented gel beads and cones
  - Reed diffusers
  - Incense
  - Scented cleaners
Contaminant Safety

- Follow the directions on household products—always use the amounts shown on the package.
- Open a window when cleaning.

Open a window or run a fan when cleaning with chemicals.
Read Product Labels Carefully

Take extra care if you see these words on the label!

- Caution
- Warning
- Flammable
- Harmful
- Danger
- Poison
Contaminant Safety

• Keep children away from the area where you are working.
  - Children can breathe in or drink poisonous products.
• Never mix cleaning products unless the label says it is safe to do so.
• Keep toxins away from heat, sparks and fire.
• Be ready in case there is an accident:
  Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222
Safe Disposal of Contaminants

• Take unused toxins to a community hazardous waste site.
• Never dump or burn hazardous products on your property.
• Never burn hazardous products in your home.
• Recycle used motor oil and antifreeze.
• Call your township or waste recycling center for more help.
Non-Chemical Cleaning

- Use non-chemical cleaning in your home:
  - Use a plunger instead of chemicals for clogged drains.
  - Use baking soda as a scrubbing agent.
  - Use white vinegar as a grease cutter.
- Non-chemical cleaning saves money.
Non-chemical Cleaning Recipes

- **Oven Cleaner**
  - 1 cup of baking soda
  - Water

- **All-Purpose Spray Cleaner**
  - 2 tablespoons vinegar
  - 1 tablespoon baking soda
  - 2 cups water

- **Window and Glass Spray Cleaner**
  - 3 tablespoons white vinegar
  - ½ teaspoon dish detergent
  - 2 cups water

Using non-chemical cleaning products reduces allergy and asthma symptoms and saves money.
Conclusion

• Some contaminants in homes can cause allergy or asthma issues.
• Be sure to read labels carefully prevent emergencies.
• Home-made cleaners work just as well as store-bought chemicals.
Resources

Your landlord or local health department

Consumer Products Safety Commission • 1-800-638-2772 • www.cpsc.gov

EPA's Consumer Labeling Initiative • http://www.epa.gov

Healthy Indoor Air for America’s Homes • 406-994-3451 • www.healthyindoorair.org

Home*A*Syst Handbook • 608-262-0024 • www.uwex.edu/homeasyst

New Jersey Quitline • 1-866-NJSTOPS • njquitline.org

www.leadsafekids.org