

# 7 STEPS TO A HEALTHY HOME

## 1 KEEP MOISTURE OUT!

Standing water or too much **relative humidity (RH)** provides a moisture source for mold spores to grow. Moisture is also attractive to bugs and other pests. Sources of water from the outside of your home may include leaks from the roof, around windows and doors, or from an improperly graded drainage. Sources inside your home may include leaks from plumbing, such as supply or drain lines or even the hot water used in the morning's shower.<sup>2</sup>

► **Relative Humidity** describes the amount of moisture in the air at a given temperature. Relative humidity (RH) greater than 50% can cause structural damage to homes and encourage mold to grow

## 2 KEEP YOUR HOME SAFE.

Pesticides, cleaning, building or automotive products are often poisonous and require proper labeling and storage where children cannot access them. Keep children's play areas free of sharp or hard objects and furniture. Clean up clutter to limit tripping and falling hazards. Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers installed correctly and conveniently in your home will reduce the risk of property damage or death.<sup>2</sup>

## 3 KEEP YOUR HOME WELL-VENTILATED.

Clean, replace or install exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens to reduce the concentration of contaminants in your home. Vent fans with lint/dust build-up are also a potential fire hazard. Be sure these fans vent to the outside. Open windows to allow for the natural exchange of air with the outside.<sup>2</sup>

## 4 KEEP YOUR HOME PEST-FREE.

Pests such as rodents, roaches, dust mites and bed bugs want a nice warm place with food and water to live. Don't invite pests into your home or tolerate them once they get in. Keep unwanted visitors out of your home by sealing up cracks and other openings, store food in pest-resistant containers, and use common-sense **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** strategies to decrease food, water, and shelter sources for pests inside and around your home.<sup>2</sup>

► **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** an approach to pest infestations; whereby the resident works with professionals to keep pests out and avoid inviting them in.

## 5 KEEP YOUR HOME CONTAMINANT FREE.

You may not realize it, but many homes contain **volatile organic chemicals (VOCs)** and gases. Some are naturally occurring, like radon gas. Radon gas percolates up from the soil because of natural soil and rock decay. Some contaminants are ingredients in construction materials, like asbestos or lead. Other contaminants occur from regular home use, like **carbon monoxide (CO)**.<sup>2</sup>

► **Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs)** include both human made and naturally occurring chemical compounds. Most scents or odors are VOCs. Can be harmful to humans, animals and the environment.

► **Carbon Monoxide** is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas produced by the combustion of fossil fuels

## 6 KEEP YOUR HOUSE CLEAN.

Food, water and dirt invite pests like mice, cockroaches, ants, mites, bed bugs, and other small critters into your home. Frequent cleaning minimizes dust and other environmental allergens that can cause chronic, health problems, such as allergies and asthma. Reducing clutter inside takes away places for pests to hide and live.<sup>2</sup>

## 7 KEEP YOUR HOME WELL-MAINTAINED.

Maintaining your home on a regular basis will help ensure that small problems don't become bigger and more costly problems later on. Repair cracks and holes in foundations and exterior walls to minimize points of entry for pests or moisture. Fixing peeling paint will reduce the risk of lead contamination. Replace furnace filters regularly to keep indoor allergen levels manageable. Check the batteries on your smoke detectors every six months and test each unit monthly by pushing the "TEST" button.<sup>2</sup>

When these seven steps are put into action together, they create a comprehensive action plan to make your home a healthier place to live.