

Environmental Health Assessment Guide For a Home and Family

For a complete resource guide for use in conjunction with this assessment tool, with links to appropriate pages of websites, see www.envirn.umaryland.edu → assessment.

*When using websites cited in this document, the following paths will be helpful:

- www.cpsc.gov → consumer → publications → specific topics (incl. “air quality”)
- www.oehha.ca.gov → education → guidelines for safe use of art & craft material
- www.lungusa.org → air quality → indoor air quality
- www.epa.gov/iaq → introduction to indoor air quality
- www.epa.gov/pesticides → concerned citizens
- www.ace.orst.edu → NPIC → Extoxnet
- www.sis.nlm.nih.gov → toxnet
- www.atsdr.cdc.gov → toxicological profiles
- www.cdc.gov → health topics → headlice
- www.aapcc.org → poison prevention education
- www.epa.gov/mercury → fact sheets
- www.nsf.org → information for consumers → drinking water treatment
- www.cdc.gov/nceh → NCEH topics
- www.cdc.gov/niosh → safety and health topics

Year home built/age of home: _____

Condition of paint on:

Walls: _____

Window sills: _____

Paint dust present? ____ yes ____ no

Where? _____

Has paint, dust or outdoor soil sample been tested for lead? ____ yes ____ no
If yes, ask to see report.

Recent renovations (“home repair projects”)? ____ yes ____ no

If yes, what and when:

Potential health effect: lead poisoning

Related to:

- house built before 1978
- paint chips, dust, contaminated soil
- recent renovations
- arts and crafts materials

**Resources:*

www.atsdr.cdc.gov
www.cpsc.gov , www.aeclp.org
www.acminet.org,
www.oehha.ca.gov

Potential health effect: asbestos related illness

Related to:

- recent renovations
- house built before 1978

**Resources:*

www.atsdr.cdc.gov
www.cpsc.gov, www.lungusa.org
www.epa.gov/iaq

**New furniture or other furnishings
(i.e., carpeting, curtains)?**

___ yes ___ no

Unusual or strong odor?

___ yes ___ no

Hobbies, arts and crafts activities?

___ yes ___ no

Type of hobbies: _____

What materials are used?

General appearance:

Visible dust? ___ yes ___ no

Pet hairs on furniture? ___ yes ___ no

Food covered? ___ yes ___ no

Surfaces clean? ___ yes ___ no

Water accumulation? ___ yes ___ no

Where are problems found? _____

Pets: ___ yes ___ no

Types and numbers: _____

Roaches:

Observed? ___ yes ___ no

Reported by family? ___ yes ___ no**Rodents:**

Observed? ___ yes ___ no

Reported by family? ___ yes ___ no**Indications of mold or mildew:**

Odor? ___ yes ___ no

Visible? ___ yes ___ no

Description (including location): _____

Potential health effect: volatile organic compound (ex.: formaldehyde) related illness

Related to:

- construction materials (such as particleboard, laminated wood products)
- carpeting, textiles
- paints and other surface treatments
- arts and crafts supplies

**Resources:*www.atsdr.cdc.govwww.epa.gov/iaqwww.cpsc.govwww.lungusa.orgwww.acminet.orgwww.oehha.ca.gov

Potential health effect: asthma, allergy

Related to:

- dust (dust mites)
- pet hairs and body fluids
- roaches
 - feed on grease, food crumbs, water deposits
- rodents
- mold, mildew

**Resources:*www.epa.gov/iaqwww.lungusa.org (incl. "biological pollutants")www.cpsc.gov

Pesticides (“roach/insect sprays,” “mouse/rat poison,” “weed killers”) **used in home or yard?** ___ yes ___ no

Pesticides used on pets (flea baths, collars, etc.)?
___ yes ___ no

Lice or scabies treatments used?
___ yes ___ no

Insect repellants used?
___ yes ___ no

Name(s) of pesticide products used*, used on whom, where, duration and frequency of use:

*obtain name(s) of active ingredients (and other ingredients, if listed) from product labels

Where are pesticides stored (both inside and outside house):

What household cleaning and home maintenance products (paints, strippers, glues, etc.) are used*?

*obtain name(s) of active ingredients (and other ingredients, if listed) from product labels

Where are these products stored?

Where are medications stored (including over-the-counter and topical medications)?

Potential health effect: pesticide poisoning

Related to:

- use of pesticides (including lice treatments and insect repellants)
- storage of pesticides

**Resources:*

www.epa.gov/iaq
www.lungusa.org
www.epa.gov/pesticides
www.ace.orst.edu
www.sis.nlm.nih.gov
www.atsdr.cdc.gov
www.hsph.harvard.edu/headlice
www.cdc.gov
www.cpsc.gov (“poisoning”)
www.aapcc.org

Potential health effect: multiple (see resources)

Related to:

- use of cleaning and home maintenance products
- storage of these products (unintentional exposure of children)

**Resources:*

www.atsdr.cdc.gov
www.epa.gov/iaq
www.cpsc.gov (incl. “poisoning”)
www.greenseal.org
www.aapcc.org

Potential health effect: medication overdose

Related to:

- storage of medications (unintentional exposure of children)

**Resources:*

www.cpsc.gov (“poisoning”)
www.aapcc.org

What kind of fever thermometer is used?

mercury digital
 other: _____

Where is the thermometer stored?

Drinking water source:

public (pay for service) private well

If public system, request copy of most recent
Consumer Confidence Report (CCR).

If private well, when was water last tested for
 contaminants? _____

Request copy of report.

Heating Sources:

Primary: oil gas electric
 other

Secondary (space heaters, fireplaces):

oil gas electric kerosene
 wood other: _____

Location of space heaters: _____

When was the furnace last serviced? _____

When was the chimney last cleaned and
 serviced? _____

Types of cooking equipment (check all that
 apply): electric gas other: _____

Is oven ever used as a secondary source of
 heat? (“Do you ever use the oven to heat the house?”) yes no

CO (carbon monoxide) detectors present? yes no

Located where? _____

Working? yes no

Tested how frequently: _____

In past year, have multiple family members developed flu-like symptoms (“gotten
 sick from flu”) at the same time? yes no

Symptoms relieved (“Did you feel better”) when away from home? yes no

Potential health effect: mercury poisoning

Related to:

- elemental mercury spilled from broken thermometer

**Resources:*

www.epa.gov/mercury

Potential health effect: multiple (see resources)

Related to:

- water contamination

**Resources:*

www.nsf.org

www.epa.gov/safewater

Potential health effects: carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, injury

Related to:

- fuel burning appliances that are not adequately vented, maintained or situated

**Resources:*

www.cdc.gov/nceh

www.cpesc.gov (incl. “space heaters”)

www.epa.gov/iaq

www.lungusa.org

Smoke detectors present?

___ yes ___ no

Located where? _____

Working? ___ yes ___ no

Tested how frequently? _____

Potential health effect: injury, burns

Related to:

➤ fire

**Resource:*

www.cpsc.gov

Odor of cigarette smoke in house?

___ yes ___ no

Do family members or regular visitors smoke?

___ yes ___ no

Where do they smoke?

___ inside house ___ outside only ___ car

Potential health effect: cancer,
respiratory disease

Related to:

➤ secondhand smoke

**Resources:*

www.atsdr.cdc.gov

www.lungusa.org, www.epa.gov/iaq

Does the family utilize living space in the basement?

___ yes ___ no

Has radon testing been done? ___ yes ___ no

Ask to see report.

What remediation has been performed?

Potential health effect: cancer

Related to:

➤ radon entering house from underground sources

**Resources:*

www.lungusa.org

www.epa.gov/iaq

Family Interview Questions:

What are the ages of household members?

Are any household members pregnant, or anticipating pregnancy? ___ yes ___ no

How many servings of fish (including tuna) do family members eat per week? _____

Do family members (especially children) take vitamin and mineral supplements (esp. iron and calcium)? ___ yes ___ no

How many servings/day of foods high in calcium and iron (ex.: dairy, cereal, beans)? _____

Potential health effect: mercury poisoning

Related to:

➤ consumption of fish
➤ increased risk for fetus and children

**Resources:*

www.epa.gov/mercury (“fish advisories”)

Potential health effect: lead poisoning

Related to:

➤ increased GI absorption of lead in children
➤ increased absorption of lead with inadequate iron, calcium intake

**Resources:*

www.aeclp.org

www.nal.usda.gov/fnic

What are the household handwashing practices? (i.e.: Hands washed after returning from work, school, outdoor play? Before meals? During food preparation? After toileting?) _____

Occupation(s) of household teens and adults: _____

(If appropriate for occupations): **Do household members change out of work clothes and shower before returning home?** ____ yes ____ no

Potential health effect: Poisoning from multiple sources (lead, pesticides, etc.), infectious disease

Related to :

- transmission of substances from outside environment to home
- transmission of substances from hand to mouth

**Resources:*

www.cdc.gov/niosh (incl. "construction safety and health")
www.cpsc.gov ("lead")
www.aeclp.org

This material was developed at the Environmental Health Education Center of the University of Maryland School of Nursing. For more information, see envirn.umaryland.edu

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