

Healthy housing: It's good for everyone.

As a tenant, you can take steps to create healthy homes that are:

- Affordable
- Comfortable
- Safe
- Free of asthma triggers
- Lead-free and smoke-free

You can do this by making sure your home meets these key standards:

1. Proper ventilation that meets industry standards

- Air out pollutants with exhaust systems and windows. "Exhaust systems" are the fans in bathrooms and above the stove, for example.
- Ask your landlord to fix exhaust systems that aren't working and windows that can't open.

Resource:

Go to <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/insidest.html> to learn more about steps you can take to improve the air indoors.

2. Homes that are free of carpeting, smoke, and pests

- Ask your landlord to replace old carpets with smooth surface flooring, such as linoleum, tiles, and hardwood.
- Make your building smoke-free by asking people to smoke outside. Smoking inside is dangerous because smoke stays inside and lingers.
- Have window screens, water leaks, cracks, and holes fixed to keep bugs and rodents from getting in. Use sticky traps and other baits instead of spraying pesticides. Pesticides can be toxic and can also make asthma worse.

Resources:

Call 617-622-7566 or visit www.smokefreeforme.org to get information about smoke-free housing and your rights as a tenant.

Call the Asthma Prevention and Control Program at 617-534-5966.

3. Good, quality construction and renovation to prevent mold

- Make sure contractors (people who build homes or install things in homes) use best practices recommended by the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition (BUAC).
- Get water leaks repaired and wipe down wet surfaces, like sweaty walls.
- Use exhaust fans in bathrooms and dehumidifiers to control moisture and humidity.

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Resource:

Call 617-451-0049 and ask to speak with someone from the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition or see the building guidelines at: www.buac.org/healthy-homes-guidelines.

4. Lead testing and de-leading of homes built before 1978

- Get a free lead inspection if you think your apartment or building has lead paint, AND you have a child under seven or you are pregnant. Call the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program below for information.
- Eat a healthy diet. Make sure your child eats lots of calcium, vitamin C, and green leafy vegetables (for iron).
- Wash your child's toys with warm water and soap. Wipe windows and doors with warm water and paper towels.
- Never touch lead paint. If you see flaking or chipping paint, get it checked by calling the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.
- Get your child's blood levels checked. See your child's doctor or call the Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Resource:

Call the Boston Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 617-534-5966 or visit www.bphc.org/leadpoisoning.

5. Injury prevention and fire prevention standards

- Ask your landlord to fix fire and carbon monoxide alarms that aren't working.
- Make sure there are window guards above the first floor in every apartment with children.
- Ask your landlord to properly vent and fix any heating appliance, stove, and chimney that isn't working to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure your building has good lighting in stairwells and fire exits that light up.

Resource:

Call the Childhood Injury Prevention Program at 617-534-5197 or visit www.bphc.org/childinjuryprevention for Matching Buy, which gives matching funds to landlords to install window guards. The program also offers training for parents in home safety and injury prevention.