

## Take steps, big and small, to becoming healthier!

- For more information on how your house affects your health, and if you would like to schedule a well or septic testing, please contact the **Bureau of Environmental Health** at **410-313-2640**, or visit <http://www.hchealth.org> and click on Environmental Health.
- If you are a **senior** and would like more information about living facilities in Howard County or would like more information on Universal Design homes, please contact the **Office on Aging** at **410-313-6542**.
  - Ask for information on the Maryland Access Point "Aging in Place"
  - For information regarding assistance and support for all persons being considered for community placements, nursing homes or for medical assistance funded personal care, please contact the **Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) at the Health Department: 410-313-6541**
- If you would like to purchase radon kits or CO and smoke alarms, please visit your local home improvement store (cost ranges from \$10-\$40).
- If you are in need of a smoke alarm and cannot afford one, please contact **Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue** at **410-313-6040**.

## About the agencies and organizations involved in Healthy Homes

**Bureau of Environmental Health:** Mission: To promote and protect the health of all Howard County residents by providing information about basic sanitation practices and environmental awareness to residents, and by protecting air, water and soil from contaminants, thereby preserving the environmental health of all County residents.

**Department of Citizen Services:** Mission: To enhance the quality of life for all residents by ensuring that Howard County has a comprehensive system of human services that is accessible, responsive and effective.

**Department of Housing and Community Development:** Works to provide affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income residents of Howard County.

**Department of Licensing, Inspections, and Permits:** Mission: To provide the best and most efficient service to our permit and construction customers while assuring that the users of buildings will have good cause to feel confident of their safety and health. We also want to assure ourselves, and the public that licensees are well qualified for the task for which they are licensed and fully capable of performing to a high standard.

**Howard County Health Department:** Mission: To promote, preserve and protect the health of all Howard County residents.

**Office on Aging:** Mission: To promote a full, dignified life for older people in Howard County, encouraging their involvement in all aspects of life and recognizing them as a vital force in the community.

**The National Center for Healthy Housing:** Sponsors research on methods to reduce residential environmental hazards and to scientifically assess risks. NCHH also seeks to find scientifically valid and practical strategies that make homes safe from these hazards, to alert low income families to these risks and help them protect their children and see those strategies implemented through standards and programs established by and through insurers, lenders, federal and state laws and regulations, community organizations and the courts.



## Attaining & Maintaining a Healthy Home

Tips and Guidelines for Renters and Homeowners



Information and resources provided by the Howard County Health Department, Housing and Community Development, D.I.L.P., Office on Aging, Commission on Aging, Bureau of Environmental Health, and The National Center for Healthy Housing.

## 7 Ways to Achieve a Healthy Home



Regardless of where you may call “home,” maintaining a clean and safe residence can be beneficial to yours and your family’s health!

### What can YOU do?

1. **Keep your home DRY** by making sure there are floor drains in basements and that the roof and flashing are sound and tight, and do not admit water into the house.
2. **Keep your home CLEAN** by taking shoes off at the front door. Reduce clutter in the home and avoid using air fresheners which can cause allergic reactions.
3. **Keep your home PEST-FREE** by not leaving dirty dishes in the sink overnight and reducing crumbs and grease. Block pest entries from the outside and seal food in pest-proof containers.
4. **Keep your home VENTILATED** by making sure bathrooms, dryers, kitchen ranges, hot-water heaters and fireplaces have exhaust ventilation. Place carbon monoxide alarms and smoke detectors on every level of the home and near sleeping areas.
5. **Keep your home SAFE** by storing cleaning products in a safe location and using child-proof locks if children frequent the home. Make sure all electrical cords are secured and cannot be tripped over.
6. **AVOID contaminants** by preventing exposure then removing contaminants. Sources include construction areas on the house, chipping or peeling of paint, and mold in the home.
7. **MAINTAIN the home** by taking the trash out, replacing filter systems and unclogging gutters.

Source: *The National Center for Healthy Housing*

## Tips for Seniors

According to an AARP study, 83% of older Americans want to stay in their current homes for the rest of their lives. Thus, everyone should be aware of home safety and design as they age.

### What can YOU do?

- Clearly label medication and place in appropriate, daily containers
- Put night-lights in bathroom, hallways and bedrooms
- Use colorful non-slip mats in the tub or shower; use non-skid rugs or mats to prevent slipping in the home; and keep the temperature gauge on the hot-water heater low in order to prevent scalding
- Put police, fire department, poison control and doctors’ numbers next to the phone
- Check handrails and steps for possible defects/weaknesses; and stair coverings for possible tripping hazards

Source: *AARP and The Del Mar Resource Center; more publications are available at the Howard County Office on Aging and the Department of Citizen Services (6751 Columbia Gateway Dr., Columbia, MD 21046)*

## Healthy Howard Initiative

The Healthy Howard Initiative (HHI) was launched by the Howard County Administration and Howard County Health Department on April 9, 2007. HHI is a six-phased initiative that is comprised of *Healthy Restaurants, Healthy Recreation, Healthy Homes, Healthy Schools, Healthy Workplaces* and *Healthy Citizens*.

Under the leadership of County Executive Ken Ulman and Health Officer, Peter Beilenson, M.D., M.P.H. the innovative initiative encourages institutions important in people’s everyday lives (restaurants, workplaces, schools, recreation programs) to incorporate healthy activities and healthy products so that those using these institutions will be more likely to improve their health just by participating in everyday activities.

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