

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

K-W-L Graphic Organizer

K (Know) What do you know about keeping your home safe and healthy?	W (Want) What do you want to know about keeping your home safe and healthy?	L (Learned) What did you learn about keeping your home safe and healthy?

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Glossary

1. **Affordable housing:** housing that people can pay for and still have enough money for food, transportation, clothing and other necessities
2. **Carbon monoxide (CO):** a gas that you cannot see, taste or smell and that is very dangerous, and even fatal, to people
3. **Carbon monoxide (CO) detector:** a device that makes an alarm sound when dangerous carbon monoxide gas is in the air
4. **Childproofing:** making your home safe for young children
5. **Choking:** when a person can't breathe because something is stuck in their throat
6. **Clutter:** objects lying on the floor or piled up on counters and tables, like boxes, magazines and newspapers, food packages, dishes, children's toys, and other household items
7. **Discrimination:** when someone is treated differently (worse) because of their race, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation or other reasons; the law says that landlords cannot discriminate against people when renting housing
8. **Evict:** make someone move out of a home before their agreement ends (a landlord must go to court and prove that they have a legal reason to evict a tenant)
9. **Exposure:** when a person comes into contact with something; exposure to a harmful material, like lead, can cause health problems
10. **Fatal:** causes someone to die
11. **Hazard:** something dangerous that can hurt or kill people; these can be easy to see (like a fire on the kitchen stove) or invisible (like carbon monoxide gas)
12. **Homelessness:** not having a place to live (this may be for many reasons)
13. **Landlord:** a person who owns a room, apartment, or house and rents it to other people
14. **Lead:** a metal found in nature that is used in many products, but is harmful to people (especially children)
15. **Lead poisoning:** when too much lead in a person's body, potentially damaging their brain and other organs
16. **Lease:** the agreement between a person renting a home and the landlord, who owns the home. Both the tenant and the landlord must follow the rules of the lease.
17. **Maintenance:** keeping your home clean, safe, and working well (important to do every day for both renters and homeowners)
18. **Nausea:** feeling sick to your stomach, as though you might vomit (throw up)
19. **Non-toxic:** not poisonous to people
 - a. NOTE: household items, like cleaning products, may be toxic or non-toxic, which is why it is important to read labels on products to learn more about them and keep them in a safe place
20. **Pests:** insects or animals that are harmful to people or property (examples include bedbugs, cockroaches, and mice)

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Glossary

20. Poison: a substance that is harmful or fatal to people

a. NOTE: Some cleaning products, rubbing alcohol, antifreeze, pesticides, plants, and other materials are poisonous if a person eats or drinks them. Medications that can be taken safely by an adult can be poisonous to children, as can alcohol.

21. Rights: things that the law says you can have or do (for example, you have the right to live in a safe and healthy home, and if you rent, your landlord must help to keep your home safe and healthy)

22. Rodents: animals like mice or rats that can carry diseases and other health risks

23. Smoke detector: a device that makes an alarm sound when smoke is present in the air

24. Strangulation: when a person's neck is pressed or tied so they can't breathe, which can be harmful and even fatal (especially dangerous for children)

25. Tenant: a person renting a home

26. Toxic: poisonous materials that are harmful or fatal to people; may hurt your eyes, skin, or lungs, and can be very dangerous if swallowed

a. NOTE: household items, like cleaning products, may be toxic or non-toxic, which is why it is important to read labels on products to learn more about them and keep them in a safe place (all cleaning products should be kept in a safe place away from children for this reason)

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Reading Comprehension: Overview

We spend a lot of our time in our homes, so it's important for our homes to be safe and healthy. A safe and healthy home protects us from illness and injury.

In this lesson, we will talk about some common **hazards** to our safety and health at home. We will learn about what we can do to keep ourselves and our families safe and healthy in our homes.

Your Responsibilities:

We all have a responsibility to take care of our homes, rented or owned, so they are safe and healthy to live in. Most of the time, keeping our homes safe and healthy requires small actions that are not difficult. For example, we install **smoke detectors** to help protect against fire. We put food in sealed containers to keep out **pests** like mice and insects (bugs). The steps we take to care for our homes and families may be simple, but we need to keep doing them, every day. For example, we must test our smoke detectors and change the batteries regularly. We must clean up food spills and sweep up crumbs after we eat to keep pests away. Doing regular **maintenance** helps to achieve safe and healthy homes and is the responsibility of both the tenant and the landlord.

Your Rights as a Tenant:

If you are renting your home, you are a renter or **tenant**. You can do things to keep your home safe and healthy. You will also need help from your property manager or **landlord** (the person who owns the home). The law requires your landlord to make sure your home does not have health and safety hazards. They must keep the building in good condition and fix problems with heat, plumbing, and other necessities. Landlords must also help keep your home safe from illegal activity, like people selling drugs in a neighboring apartment.

Talk with your landlord as soon as you notice a safety or environmental problem. Most landlords will work with you to solve the problem. If your landlord refuses to fix the problem, you may need to get help from a legal

organization.¹ The law says that your landlord may not **evict** you because you told them about problems and stood up for your **rights** as a tenant.

If you do not have a home:

Living without a home is very hard. People experiencing **homelessness** may develop many different kinds of health problems because of unsafe and unhealthy living conditions. If you need a place to stay and help finding housing, start by calling 211.²

Making sure that people have **affordable housing** is one of the most important things the government can do for the health and safety of their community members.

Write a short answer based on the reading.

1. Why is it important to have a safe, healthy, and affordable home? _____

2. Describe one thing you do to keep your home safe and healthy. _____

Critical thinking skills:

1. Think about the question.
2. Talk about the answer with a partner.
3. Write a brief paragraph to answer the question.

What is an example of a health or safety problem a renter should discuss with their landlord? What are some possible things the tenant and landlord could each do to help?

¹ HOME Line provides free legal help for tenants in MN: <https://homelinemn.org/>

² United Way 2-1-1 provides free health and human services info to people in MN. Toll free: 1-800-543-7709.

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Reading Comprehension: Lead

Lead is a metal used in many products. Lead is harmful to people, especially children under 5 years old. Even a little lead in your body can damage your brain, nervous system, and other important organs.

Adults and children may experience **exposure** to lead by drinking water from pipes with lead in them or by breathing in dust with lead in it. Children may get dust and dirt with lead in it on their hands, then put their hands in their mouth. This kind of lead exposure by accidentally inhaling or consuming it can cause learning and behavior problems, seizures, and even death in children. If a pregnant woman is exposed to lead, her baby may not grow or may die. Sometimes children do not show signs of **lead poisoning**, but the lead in their bodies is still dangerous. Ask your children's doctor about testing their lead level (done through a blood test).

One common source of lead in homes is old paint on the outside and inside of buildings. Homes built before 1978 are more likely to have lead paint inside. If the paint is in good condition, it is not usually a problem. But lead paint that is cracking and flaking is hazardous to people, especially as children may eat paint chips or inhale paint dust. Some water pipes may also contain lead.

Lead in homes can also come from outdoor dust and dirt. Dust and dirt can blow into your home through open windows and doors, and you carry dirt into your home on your shoes, so it can help to not wear shoes inside.

Be careful about using medicines, candy, spices, and cooking tools like pressure cookers imported (sent) from other countries. Many imported products used in herbal medicine and home remedies contain lead and are dangerous to children and adults.

If you have lead in your home, or if you want to find out if your home has lead, you may be able to get help from your local government or another organization. Call your local health department or the number 2-1-1. Some cities and organizations offer money or other resources to help with lead removal.

Here are some steps you can take to keep children and adults in your home safe from lead poisoning:

- Wash your child's hands, face, and toys often.
- Wash your floors and windowsills weekly with a non-toxic all-purpose cleaner and water.
- Take off your shoes when you enter your home so you don't bring dirt and dust inside.
- Be careful about using products from other countries, like alarcon, alkohl, azarcon, bali gali, bint al zahab, cora, greta, farouk, ghasard, kandu, kohl, lig, lozeena, pay-loo-ah, surma and others, because they may have lead in them.
- Do not try to remove lead paint yourself, unless you are ready to follow complicated directions to do it safely.¹ If you do not follow the safety guidelines, you can make the problem worse.
- Do not paint over chipping or peeling paint. The paint must be safely removed before re-painting.
- Do not use your vacuum to clean up paint chips or paint dust. It will spread the paint dust into the air.
- Do not let children chew on painted wood (window sills, doors, cribs, high chairs, etc.), and do not let them eat dirt or paint chips. Offer children healthy snacks, like fruit, throughout the day to prevent them from eating non-food items.
- If your home is being repaired or remodeled, make sure proper safety measures are followed. Children and pregnant women should stay away from the work area until the work is done and the area has been thoroughly cleaned.
- Let cold water flow for a few minutes in the morning before using it to help clear out water that sat in the pipes overnight and may contain lead.
- Use cold tap water for drinking, cooking, or mixing infant formula, as cold water is less likely to carry lead from the pipes. If you need hot water, you can heat cold water instead of using hot tap water.
- If your work (like repairing homes or cars) involves lead, shower and change your clothes and shoes before coming home. Wash your work clothes separately from the clothes you or your family wear every day.

¹ <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/index.html>

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Lead: True / False, Writing, and Complete the Sentence

Read each sentence. Then circle True or False.

1. Lead is used in many products, like paint. True False
2. Lead is harmful to people, especially children. True False
3. Children who are exposed to lead always show signs of lead poisoning. True False
4. Medicines, candy, spices, dishes, and other products from other countries may contain lead. True False
5. Wash children's hands, faces, and toys often, and wash floors and windowsills weekly, to keep lead away. True False
6. You may be able to get help with lead removal from your city or an organization. True False

What are some things you can do to keep children and adults in your home safe from lead poisoning?
Write your ideas.

Use the words in the box to complete each sentence in the following passage.

cold	removal	vacuum	paint	lead poisoning	shoes
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Sometimes children or adults do not show signs of _____, but the lead in their bodies is still dangerous. A common source of lead in homes is old _____. Do not use your _____ to clean up paint chips or dust, because it will spread the dust into the air. Take off your _____ when you enter your home. Use _____ water for drinking, cooking, and mixing infant formula. Let the water flow for a few minutes before using it. Call your local health department or the number 2-1-1 to learn how to get help with lead _____.

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Reading Comprehension and Activities: Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see, taste, or smell. CO causes illness, damage to the brain and other organs, and death. In the U.S., more than 500 people die every year from CO. Many people do not know that they are exposed to CO.

CO can enter your home from appliances like furnaces and boilers (which heat your home), water heaters, stoves, ovens, and clothes dryers. Space heaters, grills, and other gas- or propane-powered small equipment also produce CO. Cars, trucks, and other vehicles release CO into the air, too.

The first signs of CO poisoning may be sleepiness, weakness, and confusion. More severe CO poisoning may cause flu-like symptoms like headaches, dizziness, **nausea**, and vomiting. If you develop CO poisoning symptoms, go outside and away from potential exposure and call 911 for help.

Here are some steps you can take to keep your home safe from carbon monoxide:

- Install CO detectors near each bedroom door, test them at least once a month, and replace the batteries two times per year (some people do this when changing the clocks for daylight savings in the spring and fall). Detectors that work for both smoke and CO gas are available.
- Never run your vehicle inside the garage. Even if the garage door is open, dangerous levels of CO will build up in your garage—and the CO can spread into your home if the garage is attached.
- Only use the kitchen stove and oven for cooking. Never use them to heat your home.
- Only use grills (propane or charcoal) outside and never in the home or other closed areas like garages.
- Always use a range hood / exhaust fan when using a gas stove.
- Have your furnace / boiler and water heater checked every year.
- Make sure chimneys are in good condition.
- Smoking releases some CO and makes exposure to other CO sources more dangerous. Don't smoke and don't allow others to smoke in your home.

Write a short answer based on the reading.

1. What are some sources of CO? _____

2. What are some symptoms of CO poisoning?

3. What is one thing you will do to keep your home safe from CO? _____

Use the words in the box to complete each sentence in the following passage.

heat CO detectors year garage

Install _____ near each bedroom door, and replace batteries twice per year.

Never run your vehicle inside the _____, because it creates dangerous levels of CO. Never use the kitchen stove or oven to _____ your home. Have your furnace (or boiler) and water heater checked every _____.

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Reading Comprehension and Activities: Pests

Pests, like insects and mice, can carry disease, contaminate food, and damage homes. Bites from some insects, **rodents**, and spiders can make you sick. Some pests can make allergies and asthma worse, and bites from some pests cause uncomfortable itching. Mouse and rat droppings (poop) can also cause illness.

There are some pests in your home you might be able to see, like ants or cockroaches. Some pests might be harder to see, but you can still look for signs. For example, droppings (poop) can mean there are mice, and small blood stains on bed sheets can be a sign of bed bugs.

Bed bugs have become a bad problem in many people's homes. Bed bugs are hard to get rid of. It is important to use safe ways of getting rid of bed bugs.¹

Here are some steps you can take to keep your home free of pests:

- Seal holes in floors, walls, and on the outside of your home.
- Store food in sealed containers. Put bags of food in plastic or glass containers with tightly fitting lids.
- Clean up after meals: wipe tables, sweep the floor, and wash dishes.
- Keep the trash covered and bring it outside often.
- Keep your home clean and tidy. Get rid of newspapers, cardboard boxes, and other items that pile up on the floor and other surfaces.
- Fix any water leaks (typically in bathrooms, kitchens, or basements) that provide damp or wet spots that attract pests.
- Be very careful about using baits or traps, which are dangerous to children and pets. Never use bug bombs or foggers.
- Do NOT use pesticides, like orthene, indoors. They are **toxic** to children and adults. You (or your landlord, if you rent your home) should hire a

professional exterminator if you have a major problem with pests.

Write a short answer based on the reading.

1. What are some things you can do to keep pests out of your home?

2. What is one thing you should NOT do to get rid of pests?

Amal is talking to her friend Fadumo about a pest problem. Read the conversation with a partner.

Amal: We have ants in our house!

Fadumo: Oh, no!

Amal: The ants are getting into everything in the kitchen. I think I'll put down some ant traps.

Fadumo: Why don't you try other things first? You wouldn't want your kids eating that ant bait!

Amal: Yeah, you're right. I've told my family that we need to clean the table and sweep the floor after every meal.

Fadumo: When I had bugs in my kitchen, I took all the food out of my cabinets. Any food that was in a bag, I put in a glass or hard plastic container with a lid, so the bugs couldn't get inside.

Amal: I'll do that, too.

Fadumo: Where do you keep your kitchen trash?

Amal: It used to be in an open trash can, but now we covered it. We take it out every day or two.

Fadumo: That should help. Ants are annoying, but it could be worse ... you could have mice!

¹ Find more info about bed bugs in several languages here: <https://www.bedbugs.umn.edu/resources/multilingual-tasksheets>. For more info, contact bedbugs@umn.edu.

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Reading Comprehension: Childproofing

Childproofing, which is taking steps to make your home safe for children, is important if you have young children in your home. Look around your house carefully (even crawl around on the floor, like babies do) to look for any hazards.

Safe Sleep: Make sure your baby or toddler has a safe place to sleep. They should sleep alone in a crib, bassinet, or pack-and-play with a firm mattress and a tightly fitted sheet. Do not put anything in the crib: no blankets, no stuffed animals, no crib bumpers, etc. Sleeping—at night or during naps—with adults on a bed, chair, or couch is dangerous. Your baby can sleep in your room, but they must be in their own crib or bassinet. If you bring them into bed to nurse, put them back in their crib as soon as you’re done. Make sure there are no cords (such as baby monitor cords and window blind cords), windows, or other harmful things near the crib. Always lay your baby on their back to sleep.

Watch Kids: When your young child is awake, you (or another responsible adult) need to watch them *all the time*. Childproofing does not replace watching your child. It only takes a few seconds for a child to swallow something dangerous, climb through an open window, or turn on the stove. Never leave children alone in the bath: a child can drown even in a little bit of water.

Throw Out Hazards: Childproof your home by getting rid of things that are hazardous to your child. Throwing away or donating things is easier than keeping them away from children. For example, throw out old medicines and replace toxic cleaning products with **non-toxic** ones. Consider getting rid of any guns in your home; if you keep them, guns need to be locked up with childproof locks.

¹ See <https://www.redcross.org.uk/first-aid/learn-first-aid-for-babies-and-children/choking-child> about what to do when a child is choking. In the U.S., call 911 after trying to help the child.

Choking and Poisoning: One of the dangers we must protect children from is eating things they shouldn’t, because they could choke or be poisoned. Both **choking** and **poisoning** can be **fatal**.¹ Pay special attention to these hazards:

- All batteries (if swallowed, these cause severe burns inside children’s bodies, or even death)
- Coins and small magnets (from refrigerator magnets, toys, etc.)
- Nails, screws, bolts (keep all tools and work supplies out of children’s reach)
- Hard candy, gum, nuts, and grapes: keep away from young children, and cut all other foods, especially round ones (bananas, hot dogs, etc.), into very small pieces
- Laundry and dishwasher detergent packets or pods
- Older children’s toys with small parts, beads, etc.
- Vitamins and medicine (both prescription and over-the-counter)
- Cleaning supplies, hair relaxer, and cosmetics
- Gasoline, windshield wiper fluid, motor oil, and other outdoor chemicals

Other Childproofing Steps: Here are some other things you can do to help keep children safe in your home:

- Install child safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Make sure your gate is made for use at the top of the stairs.
- Attach TVs and furniture (dressers, bookcases, etc.) to the wall with anchors or brackets. Many children are injured, and some are killed, every year when TVs or furniture fall over on them. Some furniture comes with anti-tip hardware, or you can buy kits separately.

If you think your child may have swallowed something poisonous, call the national Poison Help Line: **1-800-222-1222**.

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Reading Comprehension: Childproofing

- To prevent strangulation, keep window blind cords away from children (tie them up at the top of the window)—or get a different type of window covering, if possible. Again, make sure the crib is not near any window or electrical cords.
- To prevent children from falling out of windows, move furniture away from windows to discourage climbing. A window screen won't stop a child from falling out. If your home has windows higher than ground level, install window guards.
- Teach children not to play with matches or lighters, and keep them out of children's reach.
- If there is a pool, pond, or other body of water near your home, use a locked gate and high fence to keep children out, if possible. Watch children carefully any time they are near water, including during baths.

Write a short answer based on the reading.

Describe safe sleeping conditions for a baby or

1. toddler: _____

2. What are some things people can throw or give away when childproofing their home? _____

Read each sentence. Then circle True or False.

1. TVs, dressers, bookcases and other heavy furniture should be secured to the wall.

True False

2. A child can die from choking on something like a battery, a coin, or a piece of food.

True False

3. You should crawl around on the floor to see hazards that babies will find when crawling.
True False

4. Some types of safety gates should not be used at the top of stairs.
True False

5. If you childproof your home, you don't need to watch your children carefully.
True False

6. Children can be strangled by window blind cords.
True False

7. A baby's crib should not have any blankets in it.
True False

Use the words in the box to complete each sentence in the following passage.

water childproofing small back

Making your home safe for young children is called _____. Babies should sleep in their own crib or bassinet. Always place your baby on their _____ to sleep. Keep candy, gum, nuts, and grapes away from children. Cut children's food into very _____ pieces to decrease the risk of choking. Watch children carefully all the time. It is especially important to watch children when they are in or near _____, including the bath, to prevent drowning.

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Reading Comprehension and Activities: Tenants' Rights

Obtaining a Lease: A **lease** is the agreement between a person renting a home and the landlord, who owns the home. It is important to have a written lease (not just a spoken agreement), and in many cases, a written lease is legally required. The landlord must give you a copy of your lease.

A lease can be *fixed-term* or *month-to-month*:

- A *fixed-term lease*, such as a one-year lease, cannot be changed or ended until the end date written in the lease, unless you and your landlord agree otherwise.

- With a *month-to-month* lease, the rental period begins the day the rent is due and lasts until the rent is due again. If your rent is due on the first of the month, your rental period runs from the first to the end of the month. You or your landlord must give written notice to end the lease. If the lease doesn't say how early you must give notice, state law is that notice must be given at least one month plus one day before the rental period ends. So, for example, if you wanted to leave at the end of June, you'd need to give written notice by May 31.

Your Rights: Here are some of your rights as a tenant in Minnesota¹:

- Your landlord must keep your home safe from health and safety hazards and in good repair.
- Your landlord may not end your lease, increase your rent, or stop your services without proper written notice.
- The landlord cannot allow illegal activities on the property, like prostitution, illegal gun use, or illegal drug activity.
- You have the right to call the police or emergency help if there is a problem in your home or on the property. Your landlord cannot punish you for doing this.
- Your landlord may not **evict** you or punish you for complaining or standing up for your rights as a tenant.
- Your landlord may not force you to move out of your apartment without going to court.

Freedom from Discrimination: You also have the right to be free from **discrimination** when you seek rental housing. Landlords cannot refuse to rent to you because of your race or ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, the fact that you have children (with some exceptions), or the fact that you receive public assistance or a rent subsidy.

Oscar is talking to his landlord Felicia about a potential health hazard in his home. Read the conversation with a partner.

Oscar: Hi, Felicia. Do you have a few minutes to talk?

Felicia: Sure – what's up, Oscar?

Oscar: Well, we noticed that some of the paint around our windows is peeling. When we moved in, you gave us some papers about lead paint, so we think the paint might contain lead.

Felicia: Yes, I think it might. So the paint is peeling and coming off?

Oscar: Yes. We think the windows need to be re-painted. We're worried that the baby might eat the paint or get the dust in her mouth.

Felicia: OK. I know a guy who can do the repainting.

Oscar: I asked at the library and they told me about this organization that helps with lead paint removal.

Felicia: Oh, really?

Oscar: Here's the info. They provide some services for free and can recommend people to do the job safely. I think we might also qualify for a small grant.

Felicia: Thanks, Oscar. This is helpful. I'll call this organization tomorrow and see what they say.

Oscar: Thanks, Felicia. We appreciate that you're taking care of this quickly.

¹ Find more at <https://homelinemn.org/> and <http://www.ag.state.mn.us/consumer/handbooks/lt/CH1.asp>

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Room by Room

Bedrooms, Living Room and Family Room

- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every floor and near all rooms where people sleep. (If you rent, your landlord should provide smoke detectors.) Test alarms monthly and change batteries twice per year. Working smoke detectors reduce the risk of dying in a fire by nearly 50%!
- Don't smoke or allow anyone else to smoke in your home.
- If your home was built before 1978, test for lead paint. Get help to safely remove peeling lead paint if necessary (call 211). If you rent, your landlord must tell you if the home has lead paint or other potential hazards. Talk with your landlord if you need to have lead paint removed.
- Keep an eye out for choking hazards and other items that could hurt children. Do not keep guns in the house, or keep them locked away.
- Clean up **clutter**, like newspapers and cardboard boxes. Clutter gives mice, rats, and other pests a place to live. Clutter can also cause people to trip and fall.

Kitchen

- Watch children carefully in the kitchen. They can be burned by the stove, oven, or hot liquids. They can also grab knives off counters. Even spice powders can be dangerous to children, because they can inhale or choke on them.
- When food is cooking on the stove, stay nearby and watch it. Do not wear loose long sleeves when cooking, because they can catch on fire. If your range has a fan, use it when cooking on the stove to take carbon monoxide out of your home.
- Never use the stove or oven to heat the house.
- Throw away toxic cleaning products (like drain cleaner) and replace them with safer cleaning products. Keep any cleaning products locked away from children.

- Keep kitchen and eating areas clean to protect against pests. Store food in closed containers.

Bathrooms

- Use non-slip mats in the tub and on the floor to prevent falls. Install grab bars in the shower and next to the toilet.
- Prevent mold by cleaning regularly (you do not need to use toxic cleaners), opening windows and doors to get fresh air, and using the bathroom fan, if you have one. Mop up water spills: do not let water sit in the tub or sink or on the floor. Fix any leaks, so water is not dripping or pooling anywhere (for example, caulk around your tub).
- Keep all medicines, cosmetics (such as hair relaxer), and cleaning supplies locked away from children.

Basement and Laundry Area

- Use a dehumidifier, a machine that takes water out of the air, to dry your basement and prevent mold.
- Set your water heater temperature at 120°F (or medium / warm) to prevent burns.
- Have the furnace or boiler and other gas appliances checked yearly by a professional to make sure they do not release carbon monoxide.
- Change furnace and air conditioner filters regularly.
- Keep laundry detergent and cleaning supplies out of children's reach.

Garage, Outside of House and Yard

- To keep pests out, fix any holes and cracks on the outside of your home. Get rid of clutter and water that is sitting in your yard.
- Keep leaf gutters clear of leaves (but be careful when using a ladder!). Make sure downspouts are attached and pointed away from the house, to prevent water from coming into your home.

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Room by Room

- If there is a pool, pond, or other body of water near your home, use a locked gate and a high fence to keep children out, if possible. Watch children carefully any time they are near water.
- Shovel snow and remove ice from your sidewalks and driveway to prevent falls.
- Before backing your car out of the driveway, look around carefully for children and animals.
- If you use gasoline for your lawn mower or other appliances, store only a small amount of gas in a child-proof container in the garage, away from any source of spark or flame.
- Keep motor oil, windshield wiper fluid, and other chemicals locked up and out of children's reach. Windshield fluid is often blue or purple and looks like soda to children, but drinking even a small amount can kill a child.
- Keep supplies in your home and car, such as water and blankets, to prepare for emergencies. Know where to go during severe weather: for example, go to a basement during a tornado. Plan for different ways to get out of each room in your house if there is a fire.¹

¹ See www.ready.gov/be-informed for more information.

The ECHOminnesota YouTube channel
(<https://www.youtube.com/user/ECHOminnesota/videos>)
has videos on emergency preparedness topics.

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Definitions Match and Writing

Read each item. Write the letter from the column on the right that gives the correct definition of the term on the left. Use the readings and the glossary to help you.

1. _____ rights	a. contact with something
2. _____ maintenance	b. something dangerous that can hurt or kill people
3. _____ toxic	c. making your home safe for young children
4. _____ lease	d. the things that the law says you can have or do
5. _____ hazard	e. insects or animals that are harmful to people or property
6. _____ pests	f. the agreement between a person renting a home and the landlord, who owns the home
7. _____ exposure	g. keeping your home clean, safe, and working well
8. _____ childproofing	h. poisonous; harmful or fatal to people

Write sentences giving advice to a friend or family member on how to keep their home safe and healthy.

Lesson 12: Safe and Healthy Homes

Quiz

Read the questions. Then circle the correct answer.

1. A safe and healthy home ...
 - A. protects us from illness
 - B. protects us from injury
 - C. isn't very important
 - D. both A and B

2. Which of these things should be kept locked away, out of children's reach?
 - A. batteries
 - B. guns
 - C. windshield wiper fluid
 - D. hair relaxer
 - E. all of the above

3. Affordable housing is important for the health and safety of our communities.
 - A. yes
 - B. no

4. What is an example of maintenance to keep your home safe and healthy?
 - A. replacing the batteries in your smoke and CO detectors twice a year
 - B. cleaning the dishes, table, and floor after meals
 - C. filling holes where pests can get into your home
 - D. all of the above

5. Which of these health hazards are easy to see?
 - A. lead
 - B. carbon monoxide
 - C. bed bugs
 - D. none of the above

6. How can you prevent falls?
 - A. remove snow and ice from your sidewalks and driveway
 - B. clean up clutter in your home
 - C. use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on the bathroom floor
 - D. all of the above

7. What are some of your rights as a tenant in Minnesota?
 - A. Your landlord must help you keep your home safe and healthy
 - B. Your landlord cannot allow illegal activities on the property
 - C. Your landlord may not evict you for standing up for your rights
 - D. all of the above

8. What are some things you can do to be safe while cooking? _____

