

The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Promote Healthy Homes



FACT SHEET

What is a *Call to Action*?

The *Call to Action* is a science-based document to stimulate action nationwide to solve a major public health problem.

Who is this *Call to Action* for?

This *Call to Action* describes steps all Americans can take to prevent disease, disability and injury that may result from health hazards in homes. It outlines specific actions for individuals, community and faith-based organizations, home lenders, developers, builders and inspectors, health care providers, policymakers, and the government.

Why is the Surgeon General issuing this *Call to Action*?

Unhealthy and unsafe housing continues to affect the health of millions of people of all income levels, geographic areas, and walks of life in the United States. For example, Asthma, lead poisoning, deaths in house fires, falls on stairs and from windows, burn and scald injuries, and drowning in bathtubs and pools remain leading preventable causes of death, disease, and disability in the United States today.

The Surgeon General is issuing this *Call to Action* to focus attention on the public health impact of housing and to begin a national dialogue on how we can promote healthy homes in the United States.

What are the goals of this *Call to Action*?

This *Call to Action* outlines a society-wide approach to healthy homes that will result in the greatest possible public health impact and reduce disparities in the availability of healthy, safe, affordable, accessible, and environmentally friendly homes. Goals include:

- **Ensure Healthy, Safe, Affordable and Accessible Homes**
 - A healthy, safe, affordable and accessible home supports residents' fundamental physical and psychological needs and protects them from illness and injury.
- **Increase Public Awareness and Promote Health Literacy**
 - There is a need to improve the public's understanding of the connection between their home and health. Health literacy, including an understanding of the concepts and terms related to healthy homes, helps people take actions that foster healthy and safe homes. Stakeholders including educators, community-based organizations, and others have key roles in improving housing-health literacy.
- **Conduct Healthy Homes Research**
 - Although in the last decade research demonstrating the link between specific housing conditions and health has matured, significant gaps remain that need to be addressed.
- **Translate Research into Practice and Policy**
 - To improve human health, research discoveries must be translated into practical applications. Both basic research, in which scientists study disease at a molecular or cellular level, and applied research, which scientists study whether proposed interventions are effective, need to be brought to the reality of people's lives.



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