

MADISON AND DANE COUNTY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
REPORT CARD SERIES - 2014

HEALTHY HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Public Health Madison & Dane County is pleased to present the Healthy Homes and Communities section of the 2014 edition of the Environmental Health Report Card series. The Environmental Report Card provides the most recent data analysis available of Dane County health issues that involve the interaction and subsequent impact between environmental quality and human health. The data presented in this report series builds upon prior editions of the Environmental Health Report Card and provides a review of environmental health topics relevant to Dane County and the City of Madison.

The data from this report has been collected from a wide variety of stake holders including academia, private industry, and public health professionals and agencies throughout the county, state, and federal levels. When possible, each report in the series compares the data collected for the City of Madison and Dane County to established standards, desired goals and objectives, and average values of other communities or the State of Wisconsin. Additional resources used to help assess this data have come from the Health People 2020 Objectives and Healthiest Wisconsin 2020 Objectives and Focus Areas. Objectives listed in these documents focus on several areas of public health including environmental issues. Although these objectives are not always measurable at the local level, they provide a solid foundation to effectively assess the environmental issues that impact public health in Dane County.

The Environmental Health Report Card continues to evolve with each new edition. In the current edition, each section of the report (Air Quality, Water Quality, Food Safety, Healthy Homes and Communities, and Sustainability) will be released separately, approximately one section each quarter of the year, and followed by a full Executive Summary when each of the reports in the series have been released. The reasoning behind this change in the schedule of publication is to provide the information more efficiently and rapidly to the community. Although the primary focus of this edition of the report will focus on data from 2013 and 2014, at least five years of data will be provided (if available) and discussed to allow a better review of the current environmental health trends in our community.

Despite these changes to the report, this edition continues to utilize features from prior editions that have become useful in the presentation of the information and the understanding of the information by the community. For example, the color-coded arrow system introduced in the 2008 edition continues to be utilized in this report; the direction of the arrow indicative of the level of progress and the color (green, red, and yellow) demonstrating the type of change (positive, negative, or no significant change) for each environmental measure. In addition, potential issues and concerns that have been identified since the publication of the last report continue to be included in the appropriate section of this edition. The sustainability section of the report continues to be refined to more accurately evaluate sustainability efforts in the City of Madison and Dane County to protect our community, our environment, and preserve our rich environmental resources.

The Healthy Homes and Communities report of the Environmental Health Report Card series is the result of the collaboration of many individuals and organizations that have allowed the compilation of a wide variety of data and information that would not otherwise be possible without their assistance. References to these individuals and organizations are made in the text of this report and compiled at the end to acknowledge these efforts. We greatly appreciate their efforts on this document and apologize if any names have been inadvertently omitted.



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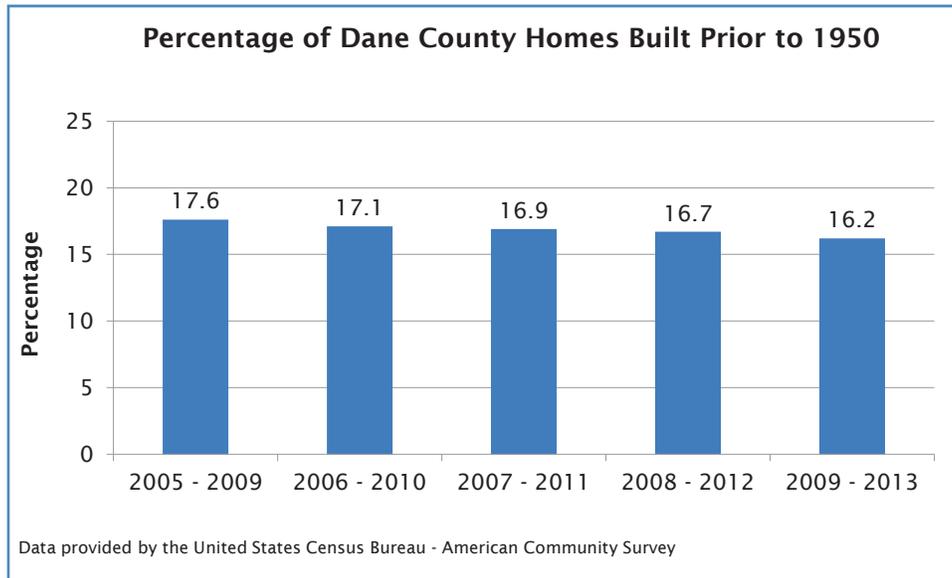
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HEALTHY HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING

Environmental Measures

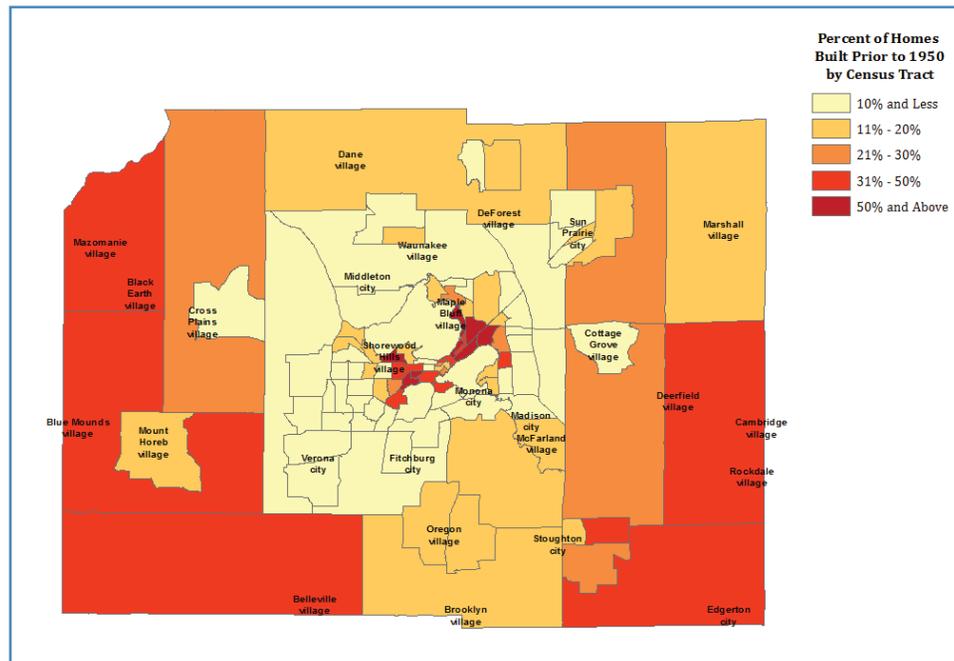
In the City of Madison and Dane County, the number of reported cases of childhood lead poisoning has remained low over the past decade. Despite this success, childhood exposure to lead remains a persistent and preventable public health challenge. The risk of childhood lead poisoning is primarily due to residence in or exposure to Dane County homes built before 1978 due to the potential presence of lead-based paints and other potential lead hazards; this is especially true for homes built prior to 1950. The highest concentration of these older homes in Dane County is located in the City of Madison; however, many older homes are also located in rural areas and other cities and villages throughout the county.¹ County-wide, approximately 16% of Dane County homes were built prior to 1950 and may pose a potential source of exposure; a modest and consistent reduction since 2005 as shown below.





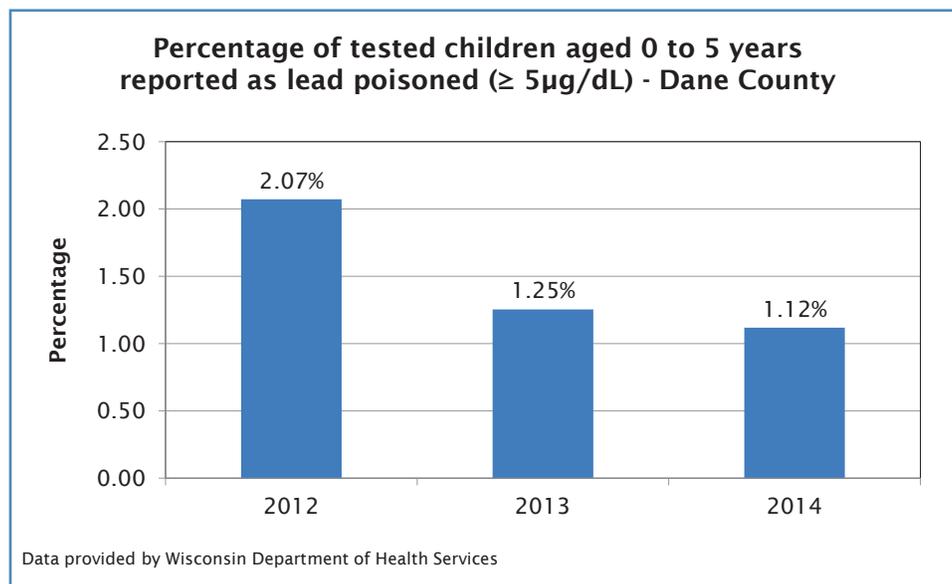
Additional information about the percentage of pre-1950 housing stock in Dane County is available from the Healthy Dane Community Dashboard (www.healthydane.org/?hcn=CommunityDashboard).^A A map of the percentage of pre-1950 housing stock by US Census tract is also shown below for further reference of the prevalence of potential lead exposure (US Census 2010).

The performance of blood lead level (BLL) screening tests is accurate method to assess potential lead exposure and identify high-risk children. The tests are recommended for children at 12 months and again at 24 months of age; children not previously screened at these ages should be screened anytime between the ages of 36 to 72 months.^{1,2} The identification of children exposed to lead is essential to reduce the risk of lead-related health impacts by eliminating or reducing the source of exposure and provide necessary treatment as needed.





As shown in previous versions of this report, the number of lead poisoned children has remained consistently low in Dane County while the number of children screened for elevated blood lead levels had increased; approximately 1,100 children tested in 2004 compared to over 5,000 in 2014 (data not shown). However, the trend of reported childhood lead poisoning was based upon poisoning levels equal to or above 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$).³ In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reduced this standard to a new and more protective reference level of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$; a reduction that allowed for the introduction of childhood intervention services to a broader population of at-risk children throughout the United States.⁴ The trend in reported lead poisoning in children aged 0 to 5 years since the change in childhood blood lead level standards is shown below (2012-2014).



Over the past three annual report periods; the percentage of children reported with blood lead levels of 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or greater consistently decreased while the number of children tested has steadily increased. This is similar to the trends noted prior to the change in childhood lead poisoning standards. In 2012, approximately 2% of over 4,600 Dane County children tested for lead reported levels greater than or equal to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$; this percentage decreased to 1.25% in 2013 and again to 1.1% in 2014 following an increase in the number of children tested (4,945 and 5,186, respectively) during these two years.

A full description of lead services is available at:

www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/healthyHomes/lead/services.cfm.

GRADE: NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

A continuing reduction of reported cases of childhood lead poisoning in Dane County accompanied by a consistent increase in childhood testing.





Sources

Lead-based paint has been identified as the primary source of childhood lead poisoning in Dane County communities. Although lead-based paints were banned for use on residential property in 1978, homes built before this legislation may contain this potential source of lead hazards.⁵ Lead poisoning resulting from lead paints often occurs when painting and remodeling older homes create lead containing dusts during the sanding of older painted and varnished surfaces. In addition to this source, lead exposure from toys, toy jewelry, and furniture with lead-based paints is also a potential source of childhood exposure.^{1,5} Although lead-based paint chips and lead contaminated dusts are the most common source of exposure, other potential sources of lead include the direct exposure to the material and/or fumes derived from parental hobbies such as stained glass and building lead-based models, folk remedies, glazed ceramics, certain imported candies, exposure to lead dusts brought into the home due to occupational exposure of the parent(s), and the consumption of drinking water from older lead pipes or pipes containing lead solder found in older homes. Lead pipes were commonly used prior to 1930 and lead solder was not banned for use in drinking water supply systems until 1986; more recently, faucets, valves, and fittings made of brass (a metal alloy containing lead) have also been recognized as a potential source of elevated blood lead levels.^{1,5,6}

Human Health Impacts

Exposure to lead can lead to neurological and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents that include learning disabilities, behavioral problems, impaired hearing, and sleeping disorders. High levels of exposure increase the risk of the development of anemia and kidney damage; extremely high levels may lead to seizure, coma, and death.^{1,5,6}

When exposed to lead, young children typically do not show obvious symptoms of illness unless the amount of lead in their body becomes very high. However, low levels can cause delays in the mental and physical development of the child that may not be visible while the child is young but could have dramatic impacts in the future. Therefore, it is critical to identify sources of lead in your home and have children that are at risk for exposure tested for lead by a health care provider. Additional information about childhood lead poisoning is available at: www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/healthyHomes/lead.



Local Response

Individual Actions

- Have your children tested for lead poisoning.
- Test your home for lead hazards; especially if the home was built before 1978. Drinking water should also be tested in older homes.
- Check the condition of schools and childcare facilities. Ask your child's school or facilities manager if they regularly inspect for lead hazards.
- More information on home and water testing for lead is available at:
www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/healthyHomes/lead.
www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/laboratory/water.cfm.

Community Actions

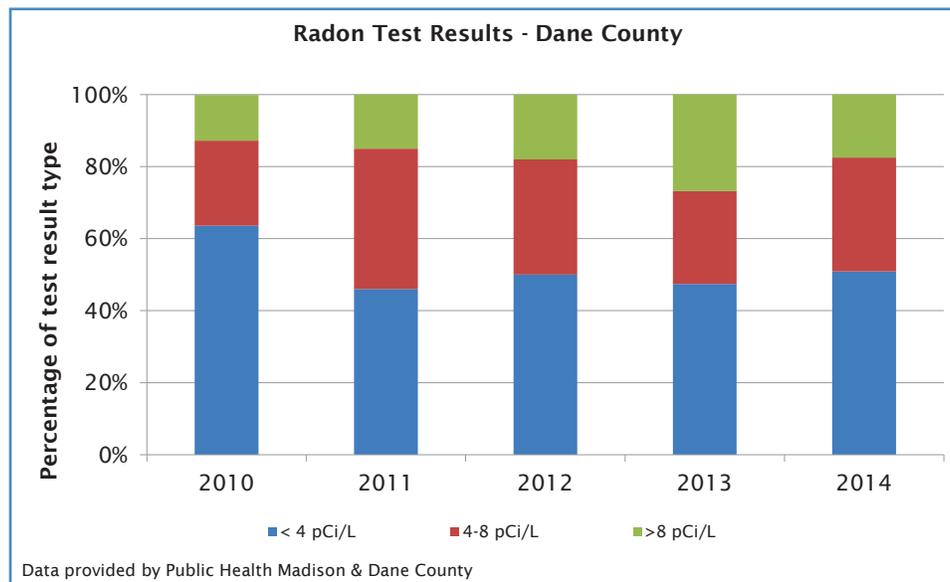
- Provide lead screening services for little or no cost for at-risk residents without access to adequate medical healthcare services.
- Continue to educate the community about the continuing hazards of childhood lead exposure. Additional tools and resources for community awareness is located at:
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p0/p00554.pdf.
- Provide resources to at-risk families to find the screening services and/or abatement and remodeling contractors to reduce exposure to lead in the home. A list of certified lead companies providing abatement, renovation, and investigation services is available at:
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/Lead/company-list.htm.



RADON

Environmental Measures

An estimated 5 to 10% of Wisconsin homes, including Dane County communities, have radon levels above the current US EPA guideline of 4 picocuries of radon per liter of radon per liter of air (pCi/L).⁷ Radon is an odorless radioactive gas derived from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water that enters the ambient air. The primary exposure to high radon levels generally occurs in the home where the individual spends the majority of his/her time.⁷⁻⁹ People living in homes with levels of radon ≥ 4 pCi/L have a greater risk of lung cancer development; however, there is no safe level of radon so even levels below 4 pCi/L pose some risk.^{8,9}



As shown in the figure above, approximately 47% of the radon tests reported to Public Health Madison & Dane County in 2013 were less than the US EPA guideline of 4 pCi/L; the remainder of the measurements exceeded this guideline. In measurements that were higher than 4 pCi/L approximately 26% ranged from 4 to 8 pCi/L and 27% reported levels greater than 8 pCi/L. Similar results were observed in 2014. During this reporting year, approximately 51% of tests were below the guideline for radon, 32% ranged 4 to 8 pCi/L and 17% reported levels higher than 8 pCi/L. These results are similar to 2010 - 2012 but also demonstrate consistent variability in reported radon test results from year to year. This outcome is due to the variable number of radon tests conducted each year throughout the county and that only a fraction of the results of these tests are reported.

Sources

Radon gas results from the radioactive decay of naturally occurring uranium in the soil, rock, and water. This gas can enter households and other types of buildings from cracks in floors and walls, around pipes, construction joints, and gaps in the structure(s).^{7,9} Exposure to radon is preventable but requires the accurate testing of current levels in the building and the identification of potential sources of entry that require repair and/or modification.



Human Health Impacts

The United States Surgeon General and the US EPA consider indoor exposure to radon one of the leading causes of lung cancer in this country; second only to cigarette smoking.⁶ In fact, as reported by the National Cancer Institute, approximately 15,000 to 22,000 lung cancer deaths are related to radon exposure every year in the United States.^{8,10,11}

Local Response

Individual Actions

- Test your home for radon and take corrective actions if elevated levels are detected. The lack of action may lead to the continued exposure of your family to radon levels that increase the risk for lung cancer development.
- More information on home radon testing is available at:
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/radiation/radon/Lists/MeasProf.htm.
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/radiation/radon/IntRdnMsurs.htm.
www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/air/problems.cfm#radon.

Community Actions

- Provide outreach services to improve the community awareness of radon.
- Encourage home testing via education campaigns and legislation.



TOBACCO AND ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE

Environmental Measures and Sources

Over the past decade, progress has been made in lowering smoking rates among youth and adults, empowering local advocacy, improving the availability of educational resources, and decreasing the potential exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) in Dane County and the City of Madison.^{12,13} However, despite this notable success, tobacco use and ETS exposure remain a consistent public health challenge in our community resulting in not only a significant financial loss due to health care costs and lost productivity but a steep social cost due to tobacco-related death, disease, and disability. In fact, approximately 14% of adults, 9% of high school students (grades 9-12), and 2% of middle school students (grades 7-8) still smoke tobacco.¹⁴⁻¹⁸ This is an improvement compared to earlier in the decade where over 17% of adults and approximately 17% of high school students and 6% of middle school students reported cigarette smoking (2005 Dane County Youth Survey).¹⁸⁻²⁰

Human Health Impacts

Cigarette smoking results in over 480,000 deaths in the United States each year; accounting for nearly 1 in 5 deaths nationwide. In fact, approximately 90% of all lung cancer deaths in men and women and 80% of chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) are the result of smoking. In addition to these significant health impacts, cigarette smoking is also linked to an increased risk of a variety of other diseases and health conditions including cardiovascular disease, stroke, low birth weight, and various cancers in addition to lung cancer such as bladder, stomach, liver, and colon and rectal cancers.²¹

Exposure to ETS also continues to be a public health challenge in Dane County and the City of Madison. Exposure is associated with an increased risk of tobacco-related disease among non-smoking adults that are typically observed in cigarette smokers; the result is the deaths of an estimated 50,000 non-smokers annually due to ETS exposure in the United States. Approximately 34,000 of these deaths are attributed to cardiovascular disease; an addition 7,000 deaths are associated with ETS-related lung cancers.²² Among children, ETS has been associated with increased respiratory infections, asthma induction and exacerbation, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).^{22,23}

Local Response

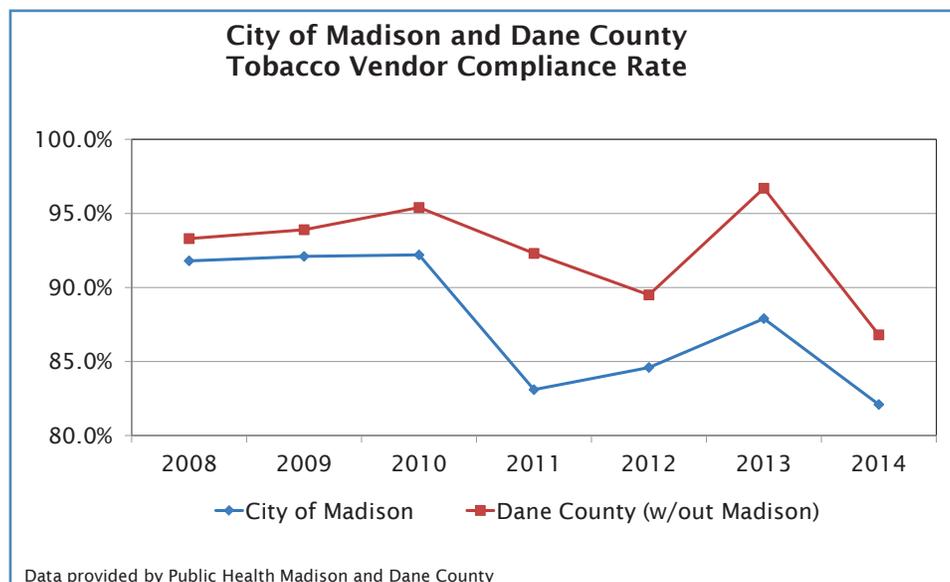
Individual Actions

- Quit smoking if you are currently smoking. If someone in your home is a smoker encourage them to quit. Resources to help quit smoking are available at www.publichealthmdc.com/TFCDC/programs/cessation.cfm and the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line: www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline.html.
- Establish restrictive smoking policies in your home and automobile(s) to decrease ETS exposure to children and non-smoking adults in your family. These self-imposed household restrictions will not only decrease ETS exposure but may also influence the perception of social acceptability of smoking and potentially reduce future tobacco use by children and adolescents exposed to the policy.^{24,25}



Community Actions

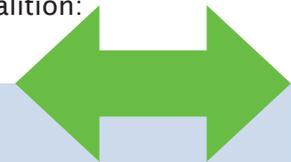
- Pursue legislative and other type of intervention efforts that aim to lower ETS exposure, decrease smoking prevalence, and increase smoking cessation rates in our community in our community. Existing strategies should be modified and improved as necessary.
 - » Since 2005, the City of Madison has had an ordinance prohibiting smoking in all workplaces, including bars and restaurants; effective January 15, 2015 this ordinance was expanded to include e-cigarettes.²⁶ Dane County has had a similar ordinance since 2009 and has also recently included e-cigarettes.²⁷
- Prevent tobacco sales to minors. Vendors that supply tobacco products to minors is an important source of these products to Dane County youth and decreasing the availability of the product to minors may lead to a decline in use among this vulnerable population. As shown in the following figure, there has been a slight decrease in tobacco vendor compliance since 2010 in both the City of Madison and Dane County; the only exception was noted in Dane County (excluding the City of Madison) in 2013. Although these changes may be explained by annual variation, changes in vendor sales staff, appearance and behavior of youth inspectors during investigations, and number of investigations completed during the year may also contribute; PHMDC staff will continue to ensure that appropriate training is available to prevent improper tobacco sales and effective enforcement of penalties for future sales.



- Promote initiatives to improve the rate of smoke-free housing units in our community; additional information about this effort is available at: <http://wis smokefreehousing.com>.
- Provide information to the community for tobacco education and resources for smoking cessation. An example is the Tobacco Free Dane-Columbia County Coalition: www.publichealthmdc.com/tfcdc.

GRADE: NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

A continuing reduction in smoking rates and progress in further initiatives to reduce ETS exposure and improve cessation but a potential decline in vendor compliance has been identified.





MOLD

Environmental Measures

Molds are fungi that grow best in warm, damp, and humid conditions both indoors and outdoors where they play a key role in the breakdown of leaves, wood, and other plant and animal debris. Despite this positive role, the growth of molds in Dane County homes and businesses continue to be a significant public health concern due to the potential adverse human health effects of prolonged exposure to mold spores that can impact individual and community health.²⁸⁻²⁹

There is no practical way to remove all mold spores from the air to prevent mold growth and human exposure. However, in the indoor environment, controlling and/or removing moisture from the structure will control mold growth and reduce, and potentially prevent, human health impacts related to exposure to mold spores.²⁹ Additional references are provided below for information on mold prevention, removal, and information for mold remediation contractors:

www.epa.gov/mold.

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/mold.

www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/air/problems.cfm#mold.

Sources

Sources of moisture leading to mold growth include roof leaks, flooding due to plumbing failures and/or heavy rains, uncontrolled humidity, and areas of high condensation. Common sites of mold growth include bathroom tiles and/or walls, showers, basements, and areas in close proximity to windows and leaky plumbing.²⁸⁻²⁹

Human Health Impacts

Mold problems in homes, offices, and other buildings can result in allergic and/or asthmatic reactions in sensitive individuals.²⁸ Additional human health impacts from mold exposure include irritation of the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs.²⁸⁻²⁹ More serious illness including opportunistic infection, immune suppression, liver damage, endocrine and central nervous system effects, and cancer may occur from exposure to mycotoxins (mold toxins) from specific strains of mold such as Aflatoxin and Aspergillus.²⁸



Local Response

Individual Actions

To prevent exposure to mold excess moisture must be removed. This can be accomplished by:

- Remove and replace carpets and upholstery previously soaked with water. If needed accelerate the drying process with fans, dehumidifiers, and/or heaters. If possible, vacuum and remove water from surfaces.
- Keep the humidity level low in the home, office, or other building structure lower than 50%.
- Do not carpet bathrooms and basements.
- Use an air conditioner or a humidifier during humid months.
- Ensure the building structure has adequate ventilation.
- Clean bathrooms with mold killing products.
- Add mold inhibitors to paints prior to application; however, moisture must be removed to improve effectiveness of these products in the prevention of mold.²⁸⁻²⁹

Community Actions

- Continue to provide access to low cost consultation, inspections, and additional resources relating to mold issues to businesses and the general public to help reduce exposure to mold toxins and encourage appropriate removal and future prevention.

Section Note:

^A The topic descriptions that reference the Health Dane.Org website were accurate at the time of the publication of this section of the 2014 version of the Environmental Health Report Card. However, it must be noted that the Healthy Dane.Org website is updated periodically as new data is made available and may cause the text included in this report describing the data available at this resource to be inaccurate.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the individuals and organizations that provided data, reviewed the report sections, and provided suggestions to improve the final report. This report would not have been possible without their efforts. The following individuals, organizations, and databases provided the information presented in the Healthy Homes and Communities report of the Environmental Health Report Card series.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Dane County Youth Commission – Dane County Youth Assessment
Nina Gregerson, Clint Marshall, & Ryan Sheahan, Public Health Madison & Dane County
United States Census Bureau
Wisconsin Department of Health Services



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