

# The Healthy Home



## Pueblo Indoor Air Quality Initiative

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**The mission of PuebloCAREs is to improve the health of our community through sustained community action aimed at reducing toxic environmental exposures.**

We work to educate the public on ways to reduce exposure to indoor radon gas, mold, lead sources, and hazardous household waste/chemicals.

If your organization would like a presentation on any of the topics listed above, please call us at 719-214-9215, or email at [pueblo.cares@gmail.com](mailto:pueblo.cares@gmail.com).

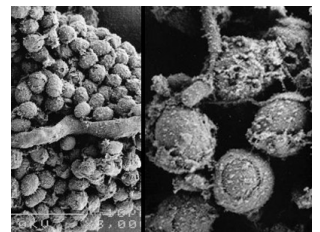
### Mold: A Common Problem with Simple Solutions

Molds are natural, living organisms found everywhere. There are hundreds of thousands of different types of mold, and they are essential to the decay process of dead material in the natural environment. They reproduce by creating microscopic spores, which travel easily through the air. When spores land on a moist surface, they multiply and

become visible. Mold growth can range from white to orange, or from green to brown or black. Even before you see the mold growth, you may detect a damp, musty smell which indicates the presence of mold.

Because spores travel so easily through the air, they can be found everywhere, both indoors and out. Mold needs a food

source, such as leaves, wood, paper or dirt, and a source of moisture — without moisture, mold will not grow. Indoors, mold can grow almost anywhere: on ceilings or walls, carpets or furniture. Moisture is the key: even in dry climates like in Pueblo County, a persistent leak or an unventilated bathroom can lead to mold growth.



Magnified mold spores.

### Health Effects of Mold

For the average, healthy individual, exposure to small amounts of mold will not cause serious illness. Yet repeated exposure to mold and mold spores can increase an individual's sensitivity and reaction. Even dead mold can cause reactions.

Sensitive individuals may experience allergic

responses when mold and mold spores are inhaled or come into contact with skin. These include headache, sneezing, runny nose, red eyes and rashes.

For individuals with asthma, molds can cause asthma attacks. And for people with compromised immune systems, mold can lead to

other infections and diseases. In rare cases, mold can produce potentially toxic substances called mycotoxins. However, this can only be determined through lab analysis, and is not common enough to be a big concern. In general, it is best to prevent mold exposure to protect one's health.

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# The Healthy Home

## Mold Prevention and Control

Moisture control absolutely is the key to mold prevention. Use the following suggestions as a guide to moisture and mold control:

- Dry areas or items that have gotten wet within 24-48 hours

- Maintain indoor humidity between 30-50%
- Perform regular maintenance on air conditioning or HVAC systems
- Provide drainage away from foundations
- Investigate signs of water damage quickly

(peeling paint, rippling wall coverings, etc.). This may indicate hidden leaks and possible hidden mold growth.

- Pay attention to moldy or musty smells which indicate mold growth.
- Fix leaks immediately.

### Sources of moisture which may lead to mold growth:

- Flooding
- Backed-up sewers
- Leaky roofs
- Humidifiers
- Constant plumbing leaks
- Watering of house plants
- Shower or bath steam and leaks
- Clothes dryers vented indoors

## Safe Clean-up Procedures for Mold

Always protect yourself when cleaning up mold by wearing long sleeves and pants, and by using rubber gloves, goggles and a face-mask. The following steps and methods are recommended by the EPA:

**Method 1:** Wet vacuum (in the case of porous materials, some mold spores/fragments will remain in the material but will not grow if the material is completely dried). Steam cleaning may be an alternative for carpets and

some upholstered furniture.

**Method 2:** Damp-wipe surfaces with plain water or with water and detergent solution (except wood — use wood floor cleaner); scrub as needed.

**Method 3:** High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum after the material has been thoroughly dried. Dispose of the contents of the HEPA vacuum in well-sealed plastic bags.

**Method 4:** Discard - remove

water-damaged materials and seal in plastic bags. Dispose of as normal waste. HEPA vacuum area after it is dried.

Please note that this assumes the water damage was from clean water. If contaminated water has flooded or leaked into the home, seek professional advice.

For more information on clean-up procedures, visit [www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold).



## Alternative Cleaners

The EPA does not recommend using chlorine bleach in routine mold clean up, except, perhaps, when immune compromised individuals are present. Detergent and water can be used to scrub away mold. Or try one of the following recipes, but remember that even dead mold can cause reactions, so be sure to remove the mold once it

has dried and died.

### Mold Cleaner Recipe 1:

1/2 c. borax  
1/2 c. white vinegar  
Add ingredients to enough warm water to dissolve. Spray or sponge on problem areas. Do not rinse.

### Mold Cleaner Recipe 2:

2 tsp. tea tree oil  
2 c. water  
Spray or sponge on mold.

Do not rinse. The smell of tea tree oil will dissipate within a day or two.

**Mold Cleaner Recipe 3:**  
20 drops grapefruit seed extract  
2 c. water

Spray directly on mold and allow to dry. Do not rinse.

**Mold growth prohibitor:**  
apply full strength white vinegar.

Information on mold in this edition is based on brochures produced by the U.S. EPA, and the EPA website: [www.epa.gov/mold](http://www.epa.gov/mold).

## Gearing up for Radon Season

Radon testing season has arrived. Be sure to stop by the PuebloCAREs office or the Pueblo City-County Health Department to pick up your free radon test kit. If you have already tested your home for radon, please encourage your

friends and family to test their homes. October 17 - 24, 2010 is Radon Testing Awareness Week and we invite you to help protect the lives of your family, friends and neighbors by encouraging them to test for radon. You cannot

know what your level of radon is unless you test. Remember radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. If your organization would like a presentation on radon, please call 719-214-9215. Test, Fix. Save a Life!

**National Radon Poster Contest**

Open to all students age 9—14

First Prize: Trip to Washington D.C. for student, parent and teacher.

Submission deadline: Oct. 31.

For more information, go to [coloradoradon.org](http://coloradoradon.org)

## Year in Review

The first year of our Level II CARE grant is already over, and it has been a busy year! Here are the highlights of the work of PuebloCAREs over the last year:

- 29 community informational meetings on radon
- 8 community events or fairs (Health Fairs, Earth Day, etc.)
- Distribution of 1200 free radon test kits, funded by a grant from the CDPHE
- News coverage on radon, lead and mold in Pueblo

Chieftain, Pueblo West View, News First 5, and Channel 11

- Creation of a website: [www.pueblocares.org](http://www.pueblocares.org),
- 5 Healthy Cleaners classes
- 8 community meetings on indoor air quality (mold, lead, radon, HHW)
- English subtitles added to radon video for hearing impaired
- 5 Do-It-Yourself classes for homeowners interested in installing a radon

mitigation system

- 12 individual consultations with homeowners installing their own systems
- Co-sponsored the Household Hazardous Waste Collection event
- Presented at the national CARE conference and the Regional Radon Stakeholders Conference

We are thankful to our Steering Committee members and our Partners for their support in making our work a success!

## Current PuebloCAREs Partners

PuebloCAREs partners provide invaluable support to the project in a variety of ways: inviting us to present to their staff; distributing flyers to their constituents; co-sponsoring public events with us; etc. We are grateful for the support of the following partners:

- U.S. EPA
- Citizens for Clean Air and Water in Pueblo
- Citizens for Clean Air in Pueblo for Education, Research, Action
- Pueblo City-County Health Dept.
- Pueblo County Commissioners
- Pueblo West Metro District
- Salt Creek Neighborhood

- Eastside Neighborhood Assoc.
- Eastwood Heights Neighborhood Assoc.
- Bessemer Assoc. for Neighborhood Dev.
- Neighborhood Pride
- Peppersauce Bottoms Neighborhood
- Access for All
- Mountain Park Environmental Center
- Senior Resource Development Agency
- Christ Congregational Church
- Diocese of Pueblo
- Sierra Club, Sangre de Cristo Chapter
- Center for Environmental Research & Technology, Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity of Pueblo, Inc.

To become a partner call PuebloCAREs!



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### Calendar of Events

**October 5 :** Understanding Radon, Spanish Peaks Library, Walsenburg, 6:00 p.m.

**October 7:** Radon Presentation to DOT staff in Alamosa

**October 13:** Steering Committee meeting 3:00 p.m.

**October 17—20:** National Radon Conference, Columbus, OH (presentation by PuebloCAREs)

**October 20:** TRI training, 10:00 a.m.

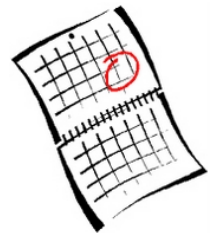
**October 20:** Partners meeting, 6:30 p.m., City-County Health Department

**November 2:** Mold presentation to Coldwell Bankers

**November 6—9:** American Public Health Association conference, Denver (presentation by PuebloCAREs)

**November 10:** Steering Committee meeting, 3:00 p.m.

**December 7—9:** CARE National Training Workshop, San Diego, CA (presentation by PuebloCAREs)



For more information on any of these events, please call: (719) 214-9215 or email: pueblo.cares@gmail.com