Finding a Healthy Home

Are you looking for a new home? Make sure your next home is a healthy one. Whether you’re buying a new home or renting, bring this checklist with you when you look at homes. Ask your realtor or landlord for answers you can’t find on your own.

**General (Interior and Exterior)**

- What year was the home built? *If the home was built before 1978, ask if it has been tested for lead.*
- Is there chipping or peeling paint? *If the paint has lead, it may be a hazard. Pay special attention to windows.*
- Are stairs, porches, and railings in good condition?
- Are there working lights outside? *Outside lights can improve safety at night.*
- Are there smoke detectors on every floor and in the bedrooms?
- Does the home have enough outlets in each room for your needs? *Using splitters and extension cords can be a fire hazard.*

**Exterior**

- Is the roof in good condition? *Look for parts that are worn or sagging.*
- Are gutters and downspouts in good condition? Does water drain away from the home? *If not, water may get into the home and grow mold.*
- Is the siding in good condition? Are there any missing, broken, or bent pieces?
- Is the home well-insulated? *Does it feel drafty or wet? Ask about previous gas and electricity bills.*
- Are there holes where pests can enter? *Look around the foundation, basement windows, and porches/decks.*

**Kitchen**

- Does the stove have a vent to the outside? *If using a gas stove, a vent can help clear the air.*
- Can you see any water damage or mold? *Check under the sink and refrigerator.*
- Is there evidence of mice, rats, or cockroaches? *Look for droppings, dead insects, bite marks, and traps along the bottom of the stove, oven, and refrigerator, and inside cabinets.*

**Living Room and Bedrooms**

- What kind of flooring is there? *A hardwood, tile, or vinyl floor is easier to clean. Carpet can trap dust and other allergens.*
- Can you see any water damage or mold? *Check the ceiling, in closet corners, on window sills, and patio doors.*
- Can you tell if the previous residents smoked inside? *Smells and smoke stains from tobacco use can stay in the home for many years. Being exposed can create lung and other health problems.*
- Can you tell if the previous owners had pets? *If you have allergies or asthma, leftover pet urine and allergens can cause problems.*
- Do the windows open in each room? Do they have screens? *You can leave through a window in the event of a fire.*

**Bathrooms**

- Does the bathroom have a vent to the outside or a window? *A vent can help prevent mold and moisture problems.*
- Can you see any water damage, mildew, or mold? *Look on the ceiling, under the sink, and around the tub and toilet.*

**Basement**

- Can you see or smell any water damage, mildew, or mold? *If so, water may be getting into the basement.*
- Has the home been tested for radon? *Radon can cause cancer. You may need to install a special ventilation system.*
- Is there a washer/dryer in unit? *If so, does the dryer vent outside?*
- Are the water heater and furnace in good condition? *Well-maintained appliances can save money on energy bills.*
- Is there evidence of mice, rats, or cockroaches? *Look for places they can enter, droppings, dead insects, bite marks, and traps.*

*See the back for resources.*
State of Michigan Resources
http://www.michigan.gov/leadsafe

If you are buying a new home, there are many resources available to help you. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has many additional checklists, including information on getting a full home inspection. **Home inspections are recommended to help protect you in making an important purchase.** Go to [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov), click on “Topic Areas”, and then click on “Buying a Home”.

Some other resources that may help are:

**Homeownership Classes**
The Michigan State Housing Development Authority has a list of FREE local homeownership and home maintenance classes. [www.mshda.info/counseling_search/](http://www.mshda.info/counseling_search/)
Phone: (517) 373-6840.

**Lead Safe Homes Program**
The Michigan Department of Community Health offers assistance in finding and removing lead-based paint hazards for low-income families in certain target areas. [www.michigan.gov/leadsafe](http://www.michigan.gov/leadsafe)
Phone: (517) 335-9390.

**Lead Safe Home Registry**
This Michigan Department of Community Health registry lists homes that have received a professional lead service. [www.michigan.gov/ismyhomeleadsafe](http://www.michigan.gov/ismyhomeleadsafe)

**Michigan Community Action Agency Association**
Michigan’s 30 Community Action Agencies offer free programs and services to help low-income families with weatherization, energy efficiency, affordable housing, and foreclosure prevention. [www.mcaa.org/](http://www.mcaa.org/)
Phone: (517) 321-7500

**Michigan Energy Options**
Michigan Energy Options offers home audits and weatherization programs to help make your home more energy-efficient. [www.michiganenergyoptions.org](http://www.michiganenergyoptions.org)
Phone: (517) 337-0422

**Michigan Housing Locator**
This is a free resource for finding affordable rental housing. [www.michiganhousinglocator.com/](http://www.michiganhousinglocator.com/)

**Michigan License Lookup**
If you are having work done on your home, make sure the people you hire are properly licensed.

Builders, maintenance, and alteration contractors: [www.michigan.gov/licenselookup](http://www.michigan.gov/licenselookup)
Phone: (517) 373-8376

Electricians, plumbers and mechanical contractors: [www.michigan.gov/bcclicense](http://www.michigan.gov/bcclicense)
Phone: (517) 241-9313

**Michigan Tax Assessor Directory**
Check if the property taxes are paid up to date through your local tax assessor’s office. Find your county website here: [http://publicrecords.onlinesearches.com/Michigan-Assessor-and-Property-Tax-Records.htm](http://publicrecords.onlinesearches.com/Michigan-Assessor-and-Property-Tax-Records.htm)

**Michigan Renter’s Assistance**
The Michigan State Housing Development Authority provides rental assistance through the housing voucher program for low-income families.
Lansing office phone: (517) 373-9344
Detroit office phone: (313) 456-3540