

Healthy Indoor Environments

Where We Live, Learn and Play

University of Georgia Family & Consumer Sciences • Volume 2 • Number 2 • March 2018



Fix A Leak Week

Written by

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Georgia Healthy Housing
one change many impacts

Inside this issue:

- Fix a Leak Week
- Environment Can Affect An Unborn Babies Brain
- Green Cleaning In The Spring!
- Healthy Home Hacks and Tips

Mark March 19th – 25th on your calendar and join the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in their 10th annual FIX A LEAK week. Leaks can occur inside or outside of your home. They can create a costly mess, so be sure to thoroughly check your home for leaks. It's better to prevent leaks than repair the damage, or pay high water bills.

Leaks are common, so let's explore ways that you and your family can spend time together while checking for typical problem areas. There are fun ways to get your children involved in helping check for a toilet leak. Drop food coloring in the toilet tank and immediately flush the toilet. If after about ten minutes the food coloring shows up in the toilet bowl, then you probably have a leak that needs to be repaired. It is relatively easy and inexpensive to replace a worn toilet flapper.

Check where the water comes into your home, like in the bathrooms and kitchen. You may have leaky pipes or dripping faucets. These are usually low- or no-cost fixes. Check the water meter before you make a repair and note the water usage. A few hours after you fix a major leak check it again. Assuming you did not use much water during this time, the usage should be low and you will notice a difference in your water bill.



Image Source: Pixabay

Did you know that if you have a leak it could account for 10,000 gallons of wasted water in your home per year? Fixing a leak can save you upwards of 10 percent on your water bill. Learn more about saving water from the EPA at <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week>.

Healthy Home Hacks

Hot steamy showers can result in mold if you don't turn the fan on or open a window when you shower. Leave the fan on, or window open, for 15 to 20 minutes after you shower. ~ Ines Beltran

Towels stay softer when you don't use fabric softener or dryer sheets. Fabric softener can reduce the absorption factor of terry cloth and other fluffy fabrics. Also, fabric softeners should not be used on microfiber. ~ Pamela Turner

Remove stains from fabrics using a mixture of 3/4 cup of hydrogen peroxide, a few teaspoons of baking soda, and a squirt or two of dish soap. Apply this mixture to the stain, let it sit for about 30 minutes, then wash as usual. Make small batches of the mixture as needed ~ Keishon Thomas

The Environment Can Affect an Unborn Baby's Brain

Written by

Ines Beltran, FACS Extension Agent, Gwinnett County

Early experiences in life shape the baby's brain circuits. Even before birth, the fetal brain is influenced by the environment. What an expectant mother ingests can interfere with brain development.

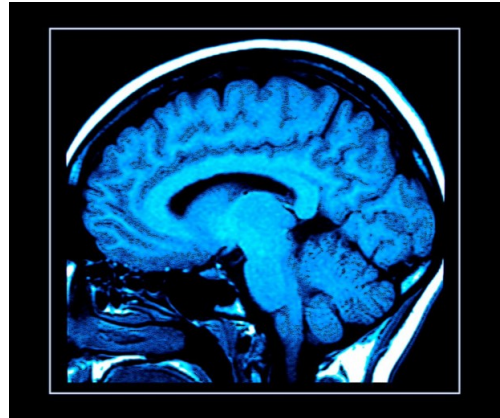
Mothers-to-be should avoid the following during pregnancy:

- Alcohol, nicotine, and recreational drugs
- Viral illnesses or untreated gestational diabetes
- Metallic chemical elements that are poisonous at low concentrations, such as mercury (Hg) and lead (Pb)
- Some prescription medications (Consult your doctor before taking medications during pregnancy.)

A mother's stress during pregnancy can also have negative effects on the developing fetus.

Babies whose mothers were under high stress during pregnancy are at increased risk of premature birth, small head size, and delays in motor development.

The good news is that parents can have a positive effect on brain development, both before birth and during early childhood. The University of Georgia Extension developed a series of fact sheets on brain development for Better Brain for Babies.



*MRI Image of Brain
Image source: Diane Bales*

These fact sheets provide information on brain development during pregnancy, as well as, tips on how to play, talk, and read with babies, and how to remove any safety hazards from the environment. The brain development fact sheets can be found at:

<http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/factSheets.php>.

Green Cleaning In the Spring!

Written by

Kristen Sumpter, FACS Extension Agent, Fulton County

After you add up the amount of time you spend inside working, sleeping, and relaxing, it's not surprising to learn that people spend an average of 90 percent of their time indoors. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has found levels of several common pollutants to be 2 to 5 times higher inside homes than outside. Yikes! Many of these pollutants come from chemicals that are found in our very own household cleaning products.

We can reduce the chemicals in our homes by replacing cleaning products with homemade green cleaners, store-bought green cleaners, or just by using a bit more elbow grease. With spring cleaning on our minds, now is the time to start making the switch! Here are a few green cleaning facts to get you started on your journey to a healthier home.

- Alkalis such as baking soda and borax scour off dirt and grease. If you need a stronger alkali, find a recipe with washing soda to get the job done.
- Both vinegar and lemon juice can be used to remove hard water stains. While lemon juice smells great, be sure not to use it on silver.
- If you want to disinfect a surface, you must consider its "dwell time." This is the amount of time the solution must be in contact with the surface and it can be found on the product's instructions.
- One of the best ways to select a store-bought green cleaning product is to look for a third-party certification, such as Green Seal or EPA's Safer Choice.

"Eco-Friendly disinfectants can be used at home!"

Please note, eco-friendly disinfectants can be used at home, but be sure to read the instructions carefully to make sure you are using it properly. These disinfectants should not be used in child care facilities or commercial food preparation sites.

Home Maintenance: Protect Your Investment
Green Cleaning

ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER #1

3 tbsp. white vinegar
½ tsp. washing soda
½ tsp. vegetable oil based liquid soap
2 cups hot water

Mix ingredients in spray bottle or bucket. Apply and wipe clean.



Home Maintenance: Protect Your Investment
Green Cleaning

NO-STREAK GLASS CLEANER

¼ cup white vinegar
1 tbsp. cornstarch
1 quart warm water

Mix the ingredients and apply with a sponge or pour into spray bottle and spray on. For lint-free results, wipe dry with crumpled newspaper, buff to a shine.



Mantenimiento del Hogar: Proteja su inversión
Limpeza Ecológica

LIMPIADOR DE VIDRIO QUE NO RAYA

¼ taza de vinagre blanco
1 cucharada de maicena
4 tazas de agua tibia

Mezcle los ingredientes. Aplique la solución con una esponja, o coloque la mezcla en una botella de rociar y rocíe. Para evitar pelusas, limpie con papel periódico seco hasta sacar brillo.



Helpful Hints for Healthy Indoor Environments

It may be time to replace the smoke detectors in your home

Daylight Saving Time begins March 11 at 2:00 a.m. When you turn your clocks forward, take time to replace the batteries in all of your smoke detectors. While you are doing that, check the back of your smoke detectors for the date of manufacture. If it is over 10 years old, it's time for a new smoke detector.



Image Source: Pixabay

5-steps to reduce clutter

Spring is a great time to reduce the clutter in your home. Start with one room or a closet. Sort items into 5 boxes marked keep, give away, recycle, sell, and uncertain. For more tips and to learn how to create a "Clutter Emergency Kit" read the UGA Extension publication on dealing with household clutter (<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/home-publications>).

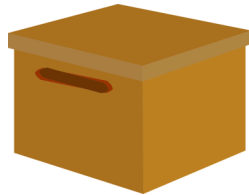


Image Source: Pixabay



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This newsletter is produced by UGA Extension and supported in part by the U.S Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes under the Healthy Homes Partnership Grant.

<http://www.georgiahealthyhousing.org>

