

## The Five Most Dangerous Hazards in your Home:

Increasingly, home-buyers are learning the inside story on how hazards found inside homes can pose threats to their health.

“These hazards are an important reason homebuyers need to have their home thoroughly tested by a home inspector,” said Keith Alltucker, owner of Pillar To Post. “Not only are home inspectors able to detect such problems, but they have access to experts who can treat or remove the problem.”

Here are a few hazards to look for:

- **Radon**, a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas, can be present in surrounding soil or well water and seep into the parts of the home closest to the ground. The radioactive particles radon creates can damage your lungs. The only way to know if your house has radon is to test the house. There are relatively inexpensive ways to remove radon, but it's not a do-it-yourself project.
- **Asbestos** is a fibrous material used in construction because it's durable and fire retardant, but it has also been identified as a cancer-causing substance. Asbestos can be found in insulation, around pipes and furnaces and in vinyl tiles and flooring materials. When it's moved, minute asbestos fibers are released into the air and can be inhaled through the nose and mouth. Once ingested, asbestos fibers can lodge in the lungs. Surveying the home and removing the asbestos should be done by trained professionals.
- **Lead** is a metallic element that when ingested can accumulate in the blood, bones and soft tissue of the body. High concentrations of lead in the body can cause death or permanent damage to the central nervous system, the brain, the kidneys and red blood cells.

Children are especially vulnerable since their bodies are still growing. Lead can be found in drinking water and in old pipes and can be airborne or present in lead-based paint. The only way to know for sure if your home's paint contains lead is to have it tested in a qualified laboratory.

- **Hazardous wastes** are potentially dangerous materials, such as pesticides or fertilizers that were not properly stored or disposed of. Some hazardous wastes can cause death even when ingested in small amounts. Other hazardous wastes have been linked to elevated levels of cancer, permanent damage to organs, respiratory difficulties, skin rashes, birth defects and diseases that attack the central nervous system. Removal methods depend on the type of waste.
- **Ground water contamination** occurs when hazardous chemicals seep down through the soil into underground water supplies. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports an average of approximately 7,500 cases of illness linked to

drinking water in the United States each year. Faulty septic systems can also contribute to this hazard. The only way to know if your water is contaminated is to test it.

### **Did You Know?**

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, indoor air can be two to five times more polluted than outdoor air. Homeowners can take care of their lungs by having a home inspection to detect environmental and health hazards. For information about indoor air contact your local ASHI home inspector. (put in the link to our website)