

Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others

Module 3: Tips for Reducing Risks From Environmental Exposures When Providing Homecare



PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Practical Tips for Homecare Workers

STAY SAFE AT WORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health



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Suggested Citation

NIOSH [2014]. Caring for yourself while caring for others. Cincinnati, OH: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication 2015-102.

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November 2014

SAFER • HEALTHIER • PEOPLE™

Module 3: Tips for Reducing Risks From Environmental Exposures When Providing Homecare

Participant Handouts

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this training, you will be able to do the following:

- Identify common environmental risks homecare workers may be exposed to.
- Outline the potential impacts from environmental risks.
- Describe strategies and tools that can reduce risks.
- Follow positive problem-solving steps with clients.

Workshop at a Glance

Activity	Time
1. Welcome, Introductions, and Identifying Environmental Risks in Homes	30 minutes
2. Exploring the Health and Safety Impacts of Exposure Risks	30 minutes
3. Tips and Tools for Reducing Your Exposure to Environmental Risks	40 minutes
4. Talking With Clients to Uphold Healthy and Safe Practices	20 minutes
Total Time	2 hours

Environmental Exposures in Homes

What Risks Can They Create for Homecare Workers?

First, introduce yourselves and learn about each other's experience in homecare.

Second, review the list below and prioritize the items. Rank them **from 1 to 6**, with 1 being the most important and 9 being the least important. NOTE: Some concerns you might think of as environmental risks are addressed in other modules and will not be discussed today. These include unfriendly people in the house, blood, and other causes of infections.

___ **1.** Pest infestations. Which concern you?

Lice



Fleas



Roaches



Bed bugs



Mites



Rats, mice,
or other vermin



___ **2.** Bites, scratches, or allergies from:

Dogs



Cats



Birds



___ **3.** Extremely cold or hot temperatures in the homes you visit.

___ **4.** Cleaning agents.

___ **5.** Second-hand smoke.

___ **6.** Mold and mildew.

Third, list any other environmental exposures you are concerned about in homes (not including those listed above).

The Potential Health and Safety Impacts of Risks

Risks	Potential Health and Safety Impacts
1. Pests (Bugs, vermin).	Bug bites, allergies, lice, cockroaches, mites, mice, scabies
2. Pets.	
3. Temperature extremes.	
4. Cigarette or other smoke.	
5. Cleaning agents.	
6. Mold and mildew.	

Strategies for Staying Healthy and Safe Despite Risks

Group One	Pest infestations and rats, mice, or other vermin	Pets
Group Two	Extremely cold or hot temperatures in the homes you visit	Tobacco smoke
Group Three	Cleaning agents	Mold and mildew

1. What specific concerns do you have with each of the two risks you are assigned?

Risk 1: _____

Risk 2: _____

2. In what ways can your health and safety be impacted by exposure to these risks?

Risk 1: _____

Risk 2: _____

Tips for Cleaning Homes in Healthy and Safe Ways

Tips in addition to those on PowerPoint slide:

- When you make your own cleaning solution, write the contents on the bottle. Consider diluting solutions.
- Read labels and always follow directions.
- Keep containers closed when not in use.
- Don't mix different cleaning products.
- NEVER mix bleach and ammonia! The fumes can be deadly!
- Know what to do if cleaning products splash in your eyes or mouth!
- If you experience any signs or symptoms of exposure, stop using the product immediately, and move to an area with fresh air.



Photo by ©Thinkstock

Simple recipes for safer cleaners: These cleaners work well and are simple to make from items found at the grocery store. Important: If you store them, label them!

Counters, Floors, and Walls

Mix 7 drops of dish soap in a standard size (24 oz.) spray bottle and fill with water.

Tubs, Tiles, Showers, Toilets

Mix baking soda with warm water.

Floors

Add a half cup white vinegar to a half gallon water. No need to rinse. Cleans linoleum and tile.

Glass

Mix a half cup of white vinegar with a half cup water. Rub windows with newspaper.

Drains

Pour a half cup of baking soda down the drain, then a half cup white vinegar. Wait 15 minutes, then pour a pot of boiling water down the drain.

Furniture

Mix 1 part lemon juice with 2 parts olive or mineral oil. Use with a spray bottle and sponge or cloth.

Ovens

(Don't use on self-cleaning ovens)—Mix 1 cup baking soda with water to make paste. Apply to oven surfaces and let stand. Scrub with a scouring pad.

Effective Problem-solving With Your Clients

This worksheet is designed to help you think through how you will talk to clients about environmental risks and uphold healthy and safe practices.

Client's name: _____

Concern: _____

Step A: Plan the discussion. What do you hope for? What possible responses concern you?	
Step B: Be respectful. How can you make a request, not a demand?	
Step C: Use "I" statements. Describe your concern, how it affects you, and the possible impact on you and the client.	
Step D: Listen. See the issue from the client's point of view.	
Step E: Consider several solutions beyond your first choice.	
Step F: Know your bottom line.	