



# BottomLine

For members of Bloom Benefits Association 2022

## Hidden Hazards

### Clearing Out Toxins in the Home

Some hazards in the home are easy to see. Like a loose electrical socket. Or torn carpet on the stairs. But others are harder to spot. And some are invisible, in the very air you breathe. These include lead, mold, and radon.

But there are ways you can find and fix these unseen hazards. Learning about possible toxins in your home may be concerning. But knowledge can help you take action.

### Getting the Lead Out

Lead is a naturally occurring metal. It's used to make many products, like car batteries. But it doesn't belong in your body. It causes damage to the brain and nervous system. Lead exposure is especially dangerous for children. There is no "safe" level of lead in the bloodstream.

Lead exposure causes problems with thinking, learning, and memory, says Dr. Aimin Chen, an environmental health researcher at the University of Pennsylvania. This can affect how well children

## Also included in this issue:

Annual Meeting Proxy



Hotel Discount Member Benefit



5 Great Tips for Shaking the Sunday Blues



do in school. "It's also linked with attention problems and hyperactivity," he explains.

These effects aren't just found with high levels of lead. "Even at lower levels, which are more common in children, you see some of these associations," Chen says.

Lead used to be added to gasoline and paint. These uses are no longer permitted. But paint lasts in homes for a long time. If you live in a house built before 1978, it likely has lead paint somewhere.

If older paint isn't chipping or peeling, it's not likely to create lead dust, says Chen. But paint can sometimes get damaged where you might not see it. Such areas include door frames and window sashes, Chen explains. Paint on the outside of a house can also chip and fall into the dirt where kids play.

Lead can get into drinking water through old lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures, too. [Find out how to test for lead in paint, dust, and drinking water.](#)

Testing for lead is especially important for younger children, up to the age of six, Chen explains. Your health care provider can check with a simple blood test. If your

child has very high blood levels of lead, your health care provider can advise on whether they need to be treated and how.

You will also need to have the lead source cleaned up by a certified professional. Your local health department can provide information on what to do with lead paint. It's not safe to try to fix it on your own.

## Water and Mold

If you've ever left a loaf of bread or piece of fruit out too long, you've likely seen mold grow. Most types of mold are harmless. But some can be dangerous. They can produce compounds that trigger allergies or asthma attacks.

Mold can grow in buildings when water gets in, explains Dr. Matthew Perzanowski, an allergy and asthma researcher at Columbia University. And any type of dwelling can potentially get water damage, he says.

"In urban communities, it's often poor ventilation in the bathroom, or a leak in another apartment," says Perzanowski. "But water can also come from storms, or floods, or other kinds of leaks. And if you live somewhere with high outdoor humidity, that makes it harder to dry things out inside the home."

Sometimes, you can see mold on walls or other surfaces. Other times, such as with a leak behind the walls, you may just smell it, Perzanowski says. Some people describe this smell as musty, stale, or damp.

If you find mold in your home, "you have to make sure that the water source goes away," he says. "Cleaning and painting won't do any good if you don't get rid of the water."

You can clean small areas of mold growth—less than three feet by three feet—yourself, Perzanowski explains. But take precautions not to breathe in the mold.

"Wear an N95 mask and goggles. Use warm soapy water and towels you can throw away," he says.

You may need to remove and replace sections of caulking or walls that are moldy. Or throw out fabrics or rugs that can't be cleaned. Large areas of mold damage may require professional help.

Perzanowski's team is currently tracking whether a

large-scale mold removal program in New York City helps reduce asthma symptoms in both children and adults. Learn more about mold cleanup from the EPA(link is external) and CDC(link is external).

## Radon on the Radar

You likely know that smoking cigarettes is one cause of lung cancer. But cigarettes aren't the only toxin that increases that risk. An odorless, colorless, radioactive gas called radon can cause lung cancer, too.

Radon gas is found naturally in nearly all types of rock, in all parts of the country. It's a risk if it gets inside. It can seep through cracks in floors, walls, and the foundations of homes and other buildings.

Even buildings without basements can have dangerous levels of radon, says Dr. Ellen Hahn, a nursing researcher who studies cancer risk reduction at the University of Kentucky.

Exposure to radon gas is most harmful to people who also smoke tobacco, says Hahn. "But breathing radon is really dangerous for everyone," she explains. "There is no risk-free level of radon."

Low-cost and free tests can measure radon levels in the home. If levels are high, a certified radon professional can vent it outside to make the home safe again. This process is called radon mitigation.

But few households test for radon. Even fewer mitigate. Hahn and her team have been looking for ways to increase radon testing in rural Kentucky. They have been recruiting and training local residents, including high school students, as "citizen scientists." These volunteers perform home radon testing using digital radon detectors, which can be used over and over again. Standard kits for radon testing can only be used once. Her project also makes digital detectors available at local libraries.

"Libraries are trusted sources of information and resources," Hahn says, "so why not make them places to check out a radon test kit as well?"

Her team is also looking at ways to get landlords to test for and mitigate radon. Renters can test, but the landlord decides whether to mitigate, she explains.

Certain regions can be hotspots for radon gas. [Learn more about radon in your state.](#)

*Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health*

# Reducing Home Health Hazards

You can test for or prevent many home health hazards.

- If your home was built before 1978, test exposed paint for lead. You can buy test kits yourself or hire a professional. Some city health departments provide free test kits.
- Have children tested for lead exposure regularly, from at least birth through age six.
- Use vent fans in rooms that have lots of moisture, like the bathroom, to prevent mold growth.
- If you have a leak or flood in your home, dispose of damaged items as soon as possible.
- Clean small areas of mold on walls or fabric with hot, soapy water. Be sure to wear a mask, gloves, and goggles while cleaning.
- Test your home for radon. Some local, county, or state programs offer free test kits. You can contact the National Radon Program Services at 1-800-SOS-RADON (1-800-767-7236).
- Learn more about other potential toxins in the home at [go.usa.gov/xucEz](https://www.go.usa.gov/xucEz).

# NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Bloom Benefits Association will be held at 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131, on Friday, June 3, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

## **PROXY** **Bloom Benefits Association** **June 3, 2022 Annual Meeting of Members** **THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF** **BLOOM BENEFITS ASSOCIATION**

The undersigned member of Bloom Benefits Association does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Bloom Benefits Association, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Bloom Benefits Association and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [    ], or to [    ] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:  
Tim Twellman, Thom Messmer, and Nathan Dierking
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

St. Louis, Missouri  
May 9, 2022  
Date



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*Limitation/Exclusions: Discount applies to rate only, not to any additional charges. Advance reservations required. Blackout dates may apply. Discounts cannot be used with other programs.*



## Your Weekend, Your Time: 5 Great Tips for Shaking the Sunday Blues



(BPT) - Do you sometimes find yourself feeling less than optimistic as your weekend draws to a close each Sunday?

If so, you're far from alone. Stats recently published on Inc.com indicate 81% of workers have experienced the "Sunday scaries" in anticipation of the work week ahead. Still, it's important to fend off those encroaching feelings and preserve the quality of your Sunday afternoon, since weekends are generally intended to help people relax, rejuvenate and enjoy time with family and friends.

In that spirit, here are five suggestions to help energize your Sunday.

**Be intentional about weekend plans.** Plan ahead so you spend your weekend time doing what you really need or want to do - whether that involves resting, having adventures, spending quality time with family or completing projects - instead of simply waiting for things to unfold. Fulfilling your plan can help you feel more in control, ward off procrastination, provide a sense of accomplishment and eliminate any sense of having "wasted" your weekend.

**Incorporate activities you love.** Spend part of your weekend doing something you enjoy. It's all too easy to get caught up in activities you feel you have to do - social obligations, errands, chores, volunteer commitments, etc. - that you never have time for the things that give you pleasure.

**Maintain a cheerful environment.** Instead of winding down your weekend in a space that's cluttered, dark and stuffy, make sure your physical living area is neat, clean, well-lit and boosts your energy. A little scent therapy in the form of a candle, room spray or plug-in oil can be the mood boost; for example, the new Coastal Sunshine Citrus™ fragrance from Glade® is designed to energize your space by delivering a fresh breath of coastal air, a splash of citrus and a pop of pineapple.

**Consider disconnecting from your phone and computer.** Keep thoughts of work from encroaching on your weekend psyche by unplugging from your screens until Monday morning. Protect your mental and emotional space from the stress of the working world and focus on self-care instead, which can help you avoid career burnout and begin each work week renewed and refreshed.

**Prioritize sleep and eating habits.** Disregarding your normal patterns on the weekends - perhaps by skipping meals, overindulging in junk food, failing to stay hydrated or staying up until the wee hours - can easily backfire by Sunday night. Following healthy habits can enhance your general sense of well-being and set you up well for the start of your work week.

Sundays are a key part of every weekend, so don't waste them thinking about Mondays. Strive for a healthy work-life balance by claiming each Sunday for yourself, your own pursuits and your own self-care.

BottomLine is published by:  
**Bloom Benefits Association**

For information regarding your membership  
and association services, call or write:

**Membership Services Office**  
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**1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200**

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Benefits may not be available in all membership levels.  
For more information, or to upgrade your membership, please call 1-800-387-9027.



**BLOOM BENEFITS**  
**A S S O C I A T I O N**