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## Bissell healthy home manual

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Original Printing 1976, Reprinted 1988, Updated and Revised 2006 Suggested citation: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Healthy housing reference manual. Atlanta: US Department of Health and Human Services; 2006. Use of trade names is for identification only and does not imply endorsement by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Public Health Service, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Disclaimer: Links to other federal and nonfederal organizations found at this site are provided solely as a service to our users. These links do not constitute an endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CDC or HUD, and none should be inferred. CDC and HUD are not responsible for the content of the individual organization Web pages found at these links. TABLE OF CONTENTS ACKNOWLEDGMENTS We acknowledge the suggestions, assistance, and review of numerous individuals and organizations that went into the original and current versions of this manual. The revisions to this manual were made by a team of environmental health, housing, and public health professionals led by Professor Joe Beck, Dr. Darryl Barnett, Dr. Gary Brown, Dr. Carolyn Harvey, Professor Worley Johnson, Dr. Steve Konkel, and Professor Charles Treser. Individuals from the following organizations were involved in the various drafts of this manual: Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) National Healthy Homes Training Center and Network National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Department of Building, Housing and Zoning; Allentown, Pennsylvania Code Enforcement Associates; East Orange, New Jersey Eastern Kentucky University; Richmond, Kentucky University of Washington; Seattle, Washington Battelle Memorial Institute; Columbus, Ohio Specifically, our gratitude goes to the following reviewers: Dr. David Jacobs, Martin Nee, and Dr. Peter Ashley, HUD; Pat Bohan, East Central University; James Larue, The House Mender Inc.; Ellen Tohn, ERT Associates; Dr. Stephen Margolis, Emory University; and Joseph Ponesza and Rebecca Morley, Healthy Homes Training Center. A special thank-you for assistance from Carolyn Case-Compton, Habitat for Humanity, 123 East Main Street, Morehead, Kentucky. Pictures of a home under construction are courtesy of Habitat for Humanity and John King, home builder and instructor, Rowan County Technical College, Morehead, Kentucky; and Don W. Johnson, building photographer of Habitat for Humanity In addition, a special thank you to the Environmental Health Services Branch and the following staff: CAPT Craig Shepherd and CAPT Michael Herring, Commissioned Corps, U.S. Public Health Service, for their research and review during the editing of this manual. Special thanks also to Pamela S. Wigginton and Teresa M. Sims for their hard work preparing this manual for Web publication. Preface Housing quality is key to the public’s health. Translating that simple axiom into action is the topic of this book. In the 30 years since the first edition was published, the nation’s understanding of how specific housing conditions are related to disease and injury has matured and deepened. This new edition will enable public health and housing professionals to grasp our shared responsibility to ensure that our housing stock is safe, decent, affordable, and healthy for our citizens, especially those who are particularly vulnerable and who spend more time in the home, such as children and the elderly. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have worked together with many others to discover the ways to eliminate substandard housing conditions that harm health. For example, the advances in combating water borne diseases was possible, in part, through standardization of indoor plumbing and sewage, and the institution of federal, state and local regulations and codes. Childhood lead poisoning has been dramatically reduced, in part, through the elimination of residential lead-based paint hazards. Other advances have been made to protect people from carbon monoxide poisoning, falls, safety hazards, electrocution, and many other risks. However, more must be done to control existing conditions and to understand emerging threats that remain poorly understood. For example, nearly 18 million Americans live with the health threat of contaminated drinking water supplies, especially in rural areas where on-site wastewater systems are prevalent. Despite progress, thousands of children still face the threat of lead poisoning from residential lead paint hazards. The increase in asthma in recent decades and its relationship to housing conditions such as excess moisture, mold, settled dust allergens and ventilation remains the subject of intense research. The impact of energy conservation measures on the home environment is still unfolding. Simple affordable construction techniques and materials that minimize moisture problems and indoor air pollution, improve ventilation, and promote durability and efficiency continue to be uncovered. A properly constructed and maintained home is nearly timeless in its usefulness. A home is often the biggest single investment people make. This manual will help to ensure that the investment is a sound one that promotes healthy and safe living. Home rehabilitation has increased significantly in the last few years and HUD has prepared a nine-part series, The Rehab Guide, that can assist both residents and contractors in the rehabilitation process. For additional information, go to . Moisture in the air, mold buildup, and pesky allergens can negatively impact your health at home. Dehumidifiers can help alleviate allergy symptoms and make living spaces more comfortable. Here are our top dehumidifier picks. By Katherine LouieJune 22, 2018If you find yourself tossing and turning a lot at night or waking up with random aches and pains in the morning, your mattress may not be providing the kind of support that you need. We rounded up our favorite mattress toppers that can help you get a goodBy Sarah KovaJune 06, 2018Sleeping on the wrong mattress can lead to all sorts of issues that extend far beyond nighttime discomfort. Healthy sleep habits have been shown to lower the risk of many serious medical conditions and even lengthen your lifespan. By Sarah KovaJune 06, 2018If you sleep on your side, you need something different from your mattress than back and stomach sleepers. Your mattress needs to be soft enough to accommodate the curves of your shoulders and hips, but supportive enough to prevent sagging. With that parBy Sarah KovaMay 30, 2018Humidifiers can help ease symptoms of allergies and asthma, and even add moisture to dry winter skin. We ranked the top humidifiers based on price point, portability, and more in this list. Learn more about the best humidifiers you can buy here.By Caitlin McCormackApril 16, 2018Air purifiers can help reduce dust, pollen and other allergens in your home. Take a deep breath and check out our picks for best air purifiers.By Caitlin McCormackApril 13, 2018Could loving separately save your relationship? Learn how to live and love separately, wile maintaining a strong and healthy marriage or relationship. The hottest relationship advice from LifeScript.com.November 17, 2017Are you familiar with the various stages of marriage? Learn about the 7 stages of marriage and find where you fall on the list. November 17, 2017A happy husband is a man who feels loved by his wife in all ways possible. Learn ways to keep your husband happy for many years of marriage.November 17, 2017Learn about the effects of growing up in a dysfunctional family and how you can overcome the adversity you might face as an adult.November 17, 2017See More Making Homes Healthier for Families Which would you choose: to live in a home you could afford, or one that is healthy for your family? Sadly, too many families in America are forced with that decision every day. HUD believes our communities should make homes available to families that are affordable and healthy. “Healthy Homes” is a century-old concept that promotes safe, decent, and sanitary housing as a means for preventing disease and injury. There is a lot of emerging scientific evidence linking health outcomes such as asthma, lead poisoning, and unintentional injuries to substandard housing. And, there are more than 6 million substandard housing units nationwide. Help Yourself to a Healthy Home provides valuable information to assist in making your home healthier for you and your family. But it’s not just older homes that contain hazards. Even newer expensive homes may have hazards lurking within. Creating healthier housing promotes the healthy growth and development of children and has the potential to save billions in health care costs. Everyone needs a healthy home and some of the most serious health problems for children start in their home. There are special reasons to think about children: Children’s bodies are still growing. For their size, children eat more food, drink more water and breathe more air than adults. Children play and crawl on the ground and put their fingers into their mouths. Children depend on adults to make their homes safe. So what can you do? Fortunately there are some really simple ways to help make your home a healthier place for you and your family. By following the Eight Healthy Homes Principles below, you can help make your home a healthier place to live in. Follow the Eight Healthy Homes Principles 1. Keep it Dry Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in roofing systems, rain water from entering the home due to poor drainage, and check your interior plumbing for any leaking. 2. Keep it Clean Control the source of dust and contaminants, creating smooth and cleanable surfaces, reducing clutter, and using effective wet-cleaning methods. 3. Keep it Safe Store poisons out of the reach of children and properly label. Secure loose rugs and keep children’s play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand. 4. Keep it Well-Ventilated Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens and use whole house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home. 5. Keep it Pest-Free All pests look for food, water and shelter. Seal cracks and openings throughout the home; store food in pest-resistant containers. If needed, use sticky-traps and baits in closed containers, along with least toxic pesticides such as boric acid powder. 6. Keep it Contaminant-free Reduce lead-related hazards in pre-1978 homes by fixing deteriorated paint, and keeping floors and window areas clean using wet-cleaning approach. Test your home for radon, a naturally occurring dangerous gas that enters homes through soil, crawlspaces, and foundation cracks. Install a radon removal system if levels above the EPA action-level are detected. 7. Keep your home Maintained Inspect, clean and repair your home routinely. Take care of minor repairs and problems before they become large repairs and problems 8. Thermally Controlled Houses that do not maintain adequate temperatures may place the safety of residents at increased risk from exposure to extreme cold or heat. Do you hate to get sick? Wish there was a way to keep your family healthier? Even if it isn’t the highlight of your day, keeping your house clean can pay big rewards in terms of your health. Infectious viruses and bacteria can be tracked around the house if a family member is ill, and that can spread the infection and lead to new outbreaks. There’s also the danger of dander and other allergens, which can threaten your respiratory health and leave you feeling miserable if they’re left to linger in your home. Some spots in your home are more likely to harbor germs and allergens than others, though. And the frequency with which you should clean the various parts of your home varies from chore to chore. You don’t have to be confused, though. Just read the following guide to find out how frequently your chores should be carried out to keep your home and family as healthy as possible. When you think of your daily chores, you may think of dishes, sweeping, possibly laundry—but cleaning your smartphone? It’s not at the top of most cleaning checklists, but your smartphone could be making you sick if you don’t keep it clean. According to one study, the average person clicks, taps, and swipes more than 2,600 times a day over 75 separate sessions. All of that use means your phone is spending time with you everywhere you go, whether it’s somewhere clean—or somewhere like the toilet. That makes your phone a hotspot for germs. A separate study showed that of 150 phones, 124 showed signs of bacterial growth. And your phone—this device touches your ears, your lips, and the side of your face. The best way to keep your smartphone clean is to wipe it with rubbing alcohol. Before you do, though, check your manufacturer’s instructions to avoid damaging the device. And while you clean the phone, be sure the case gets wiped down as well. Cross-contamination can be a serious problem in the kitchen. Every time you cook with raw meat, you stand the chance of spreading foodborne pathogens like Salmonella. Although many people think they’re being careful, studies have shown that it’s extremely difficult to know how far the dangerous microbes have traveled in your kitchen. One of the best ways to keep your kitchen meals free from food poisoning is to wipe down kitchen counters every day. Use a sanitizing product to keep germs off your counters, and be sure to wipe down any surface that may come into contact with food. That’s important to make sure last night’s bacterial leftovers don’t end up in tomorrow’s lunch. Unless you love to clean, the thought of wiping down your toilet every day probably sounds like overkill. But wiping around the toilet bowl every day is a good way to stay infection-free. It sounds like quite a chore, cleaning the toilet each day, but remember this: if you’re doing this job each day, it doesn’t take nearly as much scrubbing each time. To make it easier, keep your cleaner close to the toilet. If it’s convenient enough, you can turn this into a healthy habit. The whole job of a humidifier is to spew moisture into the air. Guess who loves moist environments? Mold, mildew, dust mites, and bacteria, that’s who. If you use your humidifier heavily (overnight, for example), you ought to clean it about every three days. The details on how to clean a humidifier differ from brand to brand. Check your manual. Most manufacturers recommend cleaning with vinegar or bleach. Bleach is good for killing off mold and mildew, which is certainly a way to reduce risk of exposure to them from a humidifier. Also, try not to overdo it. You should aim to keep the humidity of your home at about 45%. Any more than that is just an invitation to allergens like mold and dust mites. If you’re not sure how humid your home is after using a humidifier, consider using a hygrometer, which measures humidity. Many companies offer combination thermometer/hygrometers, and they can be fairly inexpensive if you shop around. Bath towels don’t need to be washed every time you use them, but they should be used frequently enough to discourage mold and mildew. The experts recommend washing these every three or four uses, or more frequently if you’re a sporty person or otherwise sweat a lot. When you aren’t using your bath towel, make sure it’s hung up. That lets it air out, and helps further prevent mold, mildew, and bacteria from growing in one of the dark, damp places they thrive in. Bras don’t need to be washed every time you wear one. They can be worn about three or four times before they need to be cleaned. Just make sure you’re paying attention if you’ve been sweating, in which case you’ll want to wash more frequently. Your bed sheets collect a lot of skin flakes—about a million a night on average. Dead skin encourages dust mites, which feed off of it. So you can keep down this common allergen - be sure to wash your bed linens once a week using hot water around 140 F. Although once a week is a safe sheet-washing schedule for most, you may want to wash yours more frequently. Consider how you use your bed. Do your pets sleep on the bed? Do you sweat heavily at night? Do you scarf down any midnight snacks in bed? If so, it would be best to change them sooner. Having a second set of sheets makes this easier. Places where you put your hands are more likely to accumulate bacteria and viruses. Remote controls fit the bill. While you’re busy scanning through movies and TV shows, your fingertips are shedding their flora—that’s microbiology talk for all the microscopic creatures that live on your body. Then if you snack in front of the set as so many people do, you’re transferring the germs left on the remote straight to your food. And if some of the germs carry disease, you become a prime target for infection. To avoid sickness, wash your remotes once a week. You don’t want to shock yourself or ruin your electronics while you clean, so make sure the batteries are out first. Next, take a cotton swab and dip it into a mild, soapy solution. Then scrub the buttons with the swab, along with anywhere else you tend to place your hands on the remote. After the soaping, wipe everything down with a solution that is one part vinegar, two parts water. That’s enough vinegar to kill off most bacteria. Finally, before replacing the batteries, make sure everything is nice and dry. Whatever trinkets you have out in the open, dust them off weekly. Take a damp, soft rag to pictures hanging in frames, side tables, bookshelves, and any decorations you leave out. A microfiber cloth will work, too. The health benefit has to do with allergies. By keeping down dust, you can avoid dust mites, a common allergen, along with anything else mingling in your dust such as pollen. Allergy triggers like pet dander and dust are tiny—sometimes microscopic. But as small as they are, they still follow gravity. Initially they’re hovering above your floors, but they eventually come down. Carpeting traps dust and other allergens in its fibers, only to be kicked back into the air once you walk on your carpets. Carpets need to be cleaned once a week to keep your allergy triggers from overwhelming your immune system. That means vacuuming for large carpets. For small rugs, throw them in the wash once a week. Kitchen floors get sticky, and they’re the last refuge for spills and splatters that escape notice on the counters. If you have a sticky spill, mop it up right away. But even if you don’t, get the mop out once a week and mop down your hard kitchen floor. You’ll want to sweep more frequently than that, especially if you have kids. Depending on how messy the eaters are in your home, you may want to sweep daily or after each meal to keep pests and germs from gaining ground where you eat. Razors need to be replaced somewhat frequently—typically once every week or two. For men, a razor will clean up your face five to seven times before it needs to be replaced. Women may want to do this more frequently, as their blades have more area to cover. As soon as your razor starts to tug on your skin—especially if you’re shaving with the grain of your hair growth—you’ll want to replace it. The more a razor pulls against your skin, the more likely your skin is to get nicked. Plus if you’re using a dull blade, chances are greater that it’s been exposed to bacteria on the sink counter or bathtub. That means every nick stands a chance of infecting you. One common result of shaving infection is folliculitis, which causes tiny, irritated bumps to appear on your skin about a day after you shave. 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Once your brushes and sponges start to look worn and frayed, toss and replace. Yes, even this helpful machine that keeps your dishes sparkling needs to be cleaned once a month. But how do you clean one? How to Clean Your Dishwasher The first step is fairly simple: make sure the exterior is wiped down. Use a sponge, hot water, and a cleaning solution or soap. If it’s stainless steel, use glass cleaner to remove grime as well as fingerprints. Newer dishwashers have manual-clean filters. They filter out bits of food to protect your plumbing, but as you may guess that leftover food can cause some truly unpleasant odors. Remove the filter system below the bottom rack about once a week, and unscrew the center cylinder. Clean all the parts in the sink. A brush can be useful to get the grainy bits loose. While you’re at it, check the spray arm for any clogs. Finally, it’s time to sanitize. Put a clean bowl holding two cups of white vinegar near the center of the bottom rack. Then run the normal cycle of your dishwasher. Although this is a good once-a-month cleaning solution, if it’s been a long time (or never) since you cleaned your machine, you may want to start with a dishwasher cleaner from the store. These cleaners are tougher than vinegar and they can remove mineral deposits as well as discoloration. Furniture has so many nooks and crannies, buttons and spaces that can trap germs and allergens. If you’re serious about keeping a clean, healthy home, make sure these upholstered items get the vacuum once a month. Be sure to vacuum cushions and the spaces around them regularly. Spills, on the other hand, should be cleaned right away. Look for a reliable upholstery cleaner for preventing disease and injury. There is a lot of emerging scientific evidence linking health outcomes such as asthma, lead poisoning, and unintentional injuries to substandard housing. And, there are more than 6 million substandard housing units nationwide. 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By following the Eight Healthy Homes Principles below, you can help make your home a healthier place to live in. Follow the Eight Healthy Homes Principles 1. Keep it Dry Prevent water from entering your home through leaks in roofing systems, rain water from entering the home due to poor drainage, and check your interior plumbing for any leaking. 2. Keep it Clean Control the source of dust and contaminants, creating smooth and cleanable surfaces, reducing clutter, and using effective wet-cleaning methods. 3. Keep it Safe Store poisons out of the reach of children and properly label. Secure loose rugs and keep children’s play areas free from hard or sharp surfaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and keep fire extinguishers on hand. 4. Keep it Well-Ventilated Ventilate bathrooms and kitchens and use whole house ventilation for supplying fresh air to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the home. 5. Keep it Pest-Free All pests look for food, water and shelter. 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Even if it isn’t the highlight of your day, keeping your house clean can pay big rewards in terms of your health. Infectious viruses and bacteria can be tracked around the house if a family member is ill, and that can spread the infection and lead to new outbreaks. There’s also the danger of dander and other allergens, which can threaten your respiratory health and leave you feeling miserable if they’re left to linger in your home. Some spots in your home are more likely to harbor germs and allergens than others, though. And the frequency with which you should clean the various parts of your home varies from chore to chore. You don’t have to be confused, though. Just read the following guide to find out how frequently your chores should be carried out to keep your home and family as healthy as possible. When you think of your daily chores, you may think of dishes, sweeping, possibly laundry—but cleaning your smartphone? It’s not at the top of most cleaning checklists, but your smartphone could be making you sick if you don’t keep it clean. According to one study, the average person clicks, taps, and swipes more than 2,600 times a day over 75 separate sessions. All of that use means your phone is spending time with you everywhere you go, whether it’s somewhere clean—or somewhere like the toilet. That makes your phone a hotspot for germs. A separate study showed that of 150 phones, 124 showed signs of bacterial growth. And your phone—this device touches your ears, your lips, and the side of your face. The best way to keep your smartphone clean is to wipe it with rubbing alcohol. Before you do, though, check your manufacturer’s instructions to avoid damaging the device. And while you clean the phone, be sure the case gets wiped down as well. Cross-contamination can be a serious problem in the kitchen. Every time you cook with raw meat, you stand the chance of spreading foodborne pathogens like Salmonella. Although many people think they’re being careful, studies have shown that it’s extremely difficult to know how far the dangerous microbes have traveled in your kitchen. One of the best ways to keep your kitchen meals free from food poisoning is to wipe down kitchen counters every day. Use a sanitizing product to keep germs off your counters, and be sure to wipe down any surface that may come into contact with food. That’s important to make sure last night’s bacterial leftovers don’t end up in tomorrow’s lunch. Unless you love to clean, the thought of wiping down your toilet every day probably sounds like overkill. But wiping around the toilet bowl every day is a good way to stay infection-free. It sounds like quite a chore, cleaning the toilet each day, but remember this: if you’re doing this job each day, it doesn’t take nearly as much scrubbing each time. To make it easier, keep your cleaner close to the toilet. If it’s convenient enough, you can turn this into a healthy habit. The whole job of a humidifier is to spew moisture into the air. Guess who loves moist environments? Mold, mildew, dust mites, and bacteria, that’s who. If you use your humidifier heavily (overnight, for example), you ought to clean it about every three days. The details on how to clean a humidifier differ from brand to brand. Check your manual. Most manufacturers recommend cleaning with vinegar or bleach. Bleach is good for killing off mold and mildew, which is certainly a way to reduce risk of exposure to them from a humidifier. Also, try not to overdo it. You should aim to keep the humidity of your home at about 45%. Any more than that is just an invitation to allergens like mold and dust mites. If you’re not sure how humid your home is after using a humidifier, consider using a hygrometer, which measures humidity. Many companies offer combination thermometer/hygrometers, and they can be fairly inexpensive if you shop around. Bath towels don’t need to be washed every time you use them, but they should be used frequently enough to discourage mold and mildew. The experts recommend washing these every three or four uses, or more frequently if you’re a sporty person or otherwise sweat a lot. When you aren’t using your bath towel, make sure it’s hung up. That lets it air out, and helps further prevent mold, mildew, and bacteria from growing in one of the dark, damp places they thrive in. Bras don’t need to be washed every time you wear one. They can be worn about three or four times before they need to be cleaned. Just make sure you’re paying attention if you’ve been sweating, in which case you’ll want to wash more frequently. Your bed sheets collect a lot of skin flakes—about a million a night on average. Dead skin encourages dust mites, which feed off of it. So you can keep down this common allergen - be sure to wash your bed linens once a week using hot water around 140 F. Although once a week is a safe sheet-washing schedule for most, you may want to wash yours more frequently. Consider how you use your bed. Do your pets sleep on the bed? Do you sweat heavily at night? Do you scarf down any midnight snacks in bed? If so, it would be best to change them sooner. Having a second set of sheets makes this easier. Places where you put your hands are more likely to accumulate bacteria and viruses. Remote controls fit the bill. While you’re busy scanning through movies and TV shows, your fingertips are shedding their flora—that’s microbiology talk for all the microscopic creatures that live on your body. Then if you snack in front of the set as so many people do, you’re transferring the germs left on the remote straight to your food. And if some of the germs carry disease, you become a prime target for infection. To avoid sickness, wash your remotes once a week. You don’t want to shock yourself or ruin your electronics while you clean, so make sure the batteries are out first. Next, take a cotton swab and dip it into a mild, soapy solution. Then scrub the buttons with the swab, along with anywhere else you tend to place your hands on the remote. After the soaping, wipe everything down with a solution that is one part vinegar, two parts water. That’s enough vinegar to kill off most bacteria. Finally, before replacing the batteries, make sure everything is nice and dry. Whatever trinkets you have out in the open, dust them off weekly. Take a damp, soft rag to pictures hanging in frames, side tables, bookshelves, and any decorations you leave out. A microfiber cloth will work, too. The health benefit has to do with allergies. By keeping down dust, you can avoid dust mites, a common allergen, along with anything else mingling in your dust such as pollen. Allergy triggers like pet dander and dust are tiny—sometimes microscopic. But as small as they are, they still follow gravity. Initially they’re hovering above your floors, but they eventually come down. Carpeting traps dust and other allergens in its fibers, only to be kicked back into the air once you walk on your carpets. Carpets need to be cleaned once a week to keep your allergy triggers from overwhelming your immune system. That means vacuuming for large carpets. For small rugs, throw them in the wash once a week. Kitchen floors get sticky, and they’re the last refuge for spills and splatters that escape notice on the counters. If you have a sticky spill, mop it up right away. But even if you don’t, get the mop out once a week and mop down your hard kitchen floor. You’ll want to sweep more frequently than that, especially if you have kids. Depending on how messy the eaters are in your home, you may want to sweep daily or after each meal to keep pests and germs from gaining ground where you eat. Razors need to be replaced somewhat frequently—typically once every week or two. For men, a razor will clean up your face five to seven times before it needs to be replaced. Women may want to do this more frequently, as their blades have more area to cover. As soon as your razor starts to tug on your skin—especially if you’re shaving with the grain of your hair growth—you’ll want to replace it. The more a razor pulls against your skin, the more likely your skin is to get nicked. Plus if you’re using a dull blade, chances are greater that it’s been exposed to bacteria on the sink counter or bathtub. That means every nick stands a chance of infecting you. One common result of shaving infection is folliculitis, which causes tiny, irritated bumps to appear on your skin about a day after you shave. If you notice yourself breaking out when you apply makeup, your brushes could be causing the problem. You need to keep these washed frequently. That’s true especially when you leave them out on the bathroom counter, where brushes can be exposed to hair spray, dust, and anything else that gets into the air around your sink. If your brush is applying wet products, including concealer, you should wash them every two weeks. The same goes for brushes that apply any product around your eyes, such as eye shadow, whether or not the product is wet. Sponges are particularly good at absorbing moisture, making them ideal habitats for yeast and bacteria. Brushes that apply dry cosmetics, including powder, can wait to be washed for about a month. When you do wash your makeup applicators, use a mild soap such as dish soap. Scrub them gently with warm water and leave them to sit on an absorbent surface like a towel for about a day. 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