

RISK MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH EFFECTS

Investigations by authorities have confirmed that when homes are used as drug laboratories to manufacture illicit substances, widespread contamination and property damage often results^{1,2}. Studies also show that drug use (e.g. smoking methamphetamine) can result in significant chemical contamination on surfaces within homes^{2,3}. It is not just illicit drugs, indoor tobacco smoking also results in the deposition of nicotine and other contaminants on surfaces within homes⁴. It is best health practice for people not to live in properties contaminated with drug residues.



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HEALTH EFFECTS OF DRUG CONTAMINATION

- Living in a house contaminated with drugs may result in clinically observable health effects.
- Symptoms can include skin, eye and respiratory irritation, dizziness, headaches, insomnia, neurochemical changes in the brain, behaviour changes and cardiovascular effects¹.
- Studies have shown that exposure to nicotine and other smoke contaminants deposited on surfaces (known as third-hand smoke) is also a health risk⁴.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

- Young children are most at risk because they spend a greater amount of time in contact with floors and walls and regularly put their hands and other objects in their mouth¹.
- In a case involving two adults and three children, all the family members experienced adverse health symptoms but it was the youngest child who was most seriously impacted⁵.
- The health of pets can also be at risk and the symptoms are consistent with those observed in humans^{6,7}.

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVICE

- The use and manufacture of methamphetamine can cause contamination of surfaces within residential properties posing a health risk to occupants^{1,8}.
- Property owners and tenants should ensure their dwelling is free from methamphetamine contamination⁸.
- Surfaces contaminated with drug residues will continue to be a health risk unless they are appropriately cleaned¹.

THE BENEFITS OF USING SWAB FIRST™

- Regular drug screening of properties can protect owners by identifying unseen drug residues and informing appropriate actions.
- Owners and occupants using this approach may avoid legal claims for damages from occupants who suffer health effects from living in drug contaminated properties.
- The Swab First™ screening service is readily accessible and affordably priced.

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EXTENDED REFERENCE LIST

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