



Please take off shoes here

## Soil Safety

Please hang this sign at your front door as a reminder to take off shoes when people enter your home. Since most dirt gets in your house on the bottoms of your shoes, taking them off can keep your house cleaner and healthier. Dirt has germs, bacteria, chemicals, and other unhealthy things in it. Dirt and dust can be breathed in or eaten, which can be harmful to your health. So encourage family and friends to take their shoes off before they enter your home!

Here are some other tips to keep from eating and breathing in dirt and dust:

- Wash hands and face thoroughly after working or playing in the soil, especially before eating.
- Damp mop and wipe surfaces often to control dust.
- Scrub vegetables and fruits before eating.
- Use water and soap to wash – avoid “waterless” soaps.
- Wash toddler toys and pacifiers often.
- Keep pets off bare dirt so they don’t track it into the house. When possible, brush pets off before they come into the house.

Some soils in King County are contaminated with chemicals such as arsenic and lead. These chemicals have come from many places, including industrial emissions, leaded gasoline, and pesticides. Arsenic and lead can cause illness, especially in children. To reduce the chance that your family will be exposed to arsenic and lead, follow these additional guidelines:

- Repair painted surfaces in your home. Homes built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint. When older paint flakes it may become a source of lead.
- Eat a balanced diet. Iron and calcium help keep lead from becoming a problem in the body.
- Wear gardening gloves.
- Dampen dusty soils before gardening.
- Cover bare patches of dirt with bark, sod or other material, or fence off area.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink while gardening.
- Keep vegetable gardens away from old painted structures and treated wood
- Do not plant food crops under the roof overhang of your home

For more information about soil contamination please call Public Health – Seattle & King County at **(206) 296-4692**, or find us on the web at <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/tsp/arseniclead.htm>.

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