5 tips for keeping a healthy home.

Homes are the places we should feel the safest and most at ease. By practicing healthy habits and maintaining a home cleaning routine, we can keep our homes and loved ones better protected. Whether you're looking to spring clean or learn new ways to tidy up, we have tips for keeping a healthy home.

Explore these five ways to make your home healthier today, and in the future:

1. Sanitize. One of the easiest ways to leave your home feeling and smelling fresh is by sanitizing. To do this, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a combination of cleaning (removing contaminants like germs and dirt from surfaces) and disinfecting (using chemicals to remove pathogens). Boost health by cleaning and disinfecting the high-touch areas in your home daily, like doorknobs, kitchen cabinets, appliance handles, bathroom sinks, light switches and even the TV remote.

2. Create cleaners yourself. If cleaning products are tough to find, there are some approved, at-home recipes that can get the job done. For disinfecting appropriate surfaces, the CDC recommends a diluted bleach solution made from:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water, or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Wear gloves while cleaning with solution and ensure that bleach is not past the expiration date. Looking to scrub away streaks on your windows or mirrors? Try this:

- In a spray bottle, mix 50% distilled vinegar (white) and 50% tap water.
- For extremely grimy glass, prewash with soapy water, then use the vinegar spray.

3. Declutter as you go. Rather than letting clutter—and the dread to clean it—pile up, follow this helpful

rule: Each time you leave a space (whether it's the kitchen, basement or even your car), take one item with you that should be placed elsewhere. Water glass on your bedside table from the night before? Bring it to the kitchen when you go for breakfast. Extra items in your car you've been stowing? Bring one item inside each time you enter the house.

4. Store food safely. Food safety is a part of overall safety. Keep your food fresh and usable for as long as possible by following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's guidelines:

- Wipe down groceries and pantry items before storing.
- Put items that should be refrigerated or frozen away immediately.
    If food that should be kept chilled has been out too long, stick to a two-hour rule before throwing it away.

- Keep your appliances at the proper temperature (refrigerator at 40°F (4°C), freezer at 0°F (-18°C).
- Use ready-to-eat foods (like lunchmeat) as soon as possible.
- Store food in the refrigerator in covered containers or sealed bags.
- Clean your refrigerator and freezer frequently, checking for and disposing of expired items.

5. Wash your hands often. One of the most effective ways to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy is by washing your hands. Teach children the proper way to wash their hands (lather with soap, scrub both hands from fingertips to wrist for 20 seconds, rinse under warm water and turn off the faucet with a wrist or paper towel), and lead by example. Wash your hands frequently, especially after using the restroom, before and after preparing food, and when entering the house from outside.

Looking for more ways to protect your home and family? Talk to an agent about home insurance today.