

# Health Benefits of Affordable Housing Options

A lack of stable and affordable housing options as well as poor housing conditions can have an impact on physical, emotional, psychological, and behavioral health.<sup>i</sup>

Individuals who face housing instability are more likely to experience high levels of stress which can lead to increased risk of heart disease, depression, anxiety, digestive problems, sleeping issues, and a whole host of other health complications. Housing cost-burdened households also have fewer resources to spend on health insurance and preventative care.<sup>ii</sup>

Individuals or families that are housing cost burdened often do not have enough money to afford healthy and nutritious food. Housing affordability and stability is closely linked to food access<sup>iii,iv</sup> since it means households have more resources to afford other essential needs including wholesome food. Whether housing includes a kitchen, or whether housing is close to food stores, are also important factors in access to healthy food. Children who grow up in households with access to healthy and nutritious foods have better outcomes later in life.<sup>v</sup> Adults who eat nutritious and healthy food have lower risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and other diseases.<sup>vi</sup>

Where there are few affordable housing options, households may have no choice but to live in unsafe housing conditions which also puts their health at risk. Inhabitants of poorly maintained housing may be exposed to hazardous materials like lead, asbestos, or mold, all of which can cause serious health problems. Children who are exposed to lead-based paint can suffer from damage to the brain and nervous system, have delayed development, and have behavior and learning problems.<sup>vii</sup> The presence of asbestos or mold in a home can bring about lung diseases.<sup>viii ix</sup>

Unhoused people have much worse health outcomes and higher mortality rates than the general population; the homeless have a death rate that is four times as high.<sup>x</sup> Unhoused populations are often exposed to high-risk environments and are much less likely to have health insurance or receive regular care for existing conditions.

## HOUSING IS HEALTHCARE

Access to affordable housing options can reduce stress and other adverse health outcomes. Safe and affordable housing means people are less likely to be exposed to unsafe conditions in their home. Households with stable and affordable housing are more likely to have health insurance and to take preventative measures like regularly scheduled doctor visits. For residents with chronic conditions, housing stability means they are more likely able to have consistent and ongoing health care.



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<sup>i</sup> Maqbool, Nabihah et al. “The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health: A Research Summary” INSIGHTS from Housing Policy Research. April 2015. [The Impacts of Affordable Housing on Health: A Research Summary | Center for Housing Policy](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Shamsuddin, Shomon & Campbell, Colin. “Housing Cost Burden, Material Hardship, and Well-Being” Housing Policy Debate, DOC: 10.1080/10511482.2021.1882532. March 29, 2021. [Housing Cost Burden, Material Hardship, and Well-Being \(nlihc.org\)](#)

<sup>iii</sup> “Health Effects of Lead Exposure” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. March 9, 2022. [Health Effects of Lead Exposure | Lead | CDC](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Kirkpatrick, Sharon L., & Tarasuk, Valerie. “Housing Circumstances are Associated with Household Food Access among Low-Income Urban Families” Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, vol. 88, No. 2. 2011. [Kirkpatrick-Tarasuk-2011-Urban-Low-income-HH-Food-Access.pdf \(neighbourhoodchange.ca\)](#)

<sup>v</sup> “Childhood Nutrition Facts” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022. [Childhood Nutrition Facts | Healthy Schools | CDC](#)

<sup>vi</sup> “Poor Nutrition” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. June 2022. [Poor Nutrition | CDC](#)

<sup>vii</sup> “Health Effects of Lead Exposure” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. March 9, 2022. [Health Effects of Lead Exposure | Lead | CDC](#)

<sup>viii</sup> “Health Effects of Asbestos” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. November 3, 2016. [Health Effects of Asbestos | Asbestos | ATSDR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

<sup>ix</sup> “Basic Facts about Mold and Dampness” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. August 11, 2020. [Basic Facts about Mold and Dampness | CDC](#)

<sup>x</sup> Montgomery, Elizabeth., PhD et al. “Homelessness, Unsheltered Status, and Risk Factors for Mobility” Public Health Reb. Nov-Dec 2016; 131(6):765-772 [Homelessness, Unsheltered Status, and Risk Factors for Mortality - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)