

Channel 10 News Amarillo, Texas. November 25, 2007.

Unsuspecting Families Are Living In Contaminated Homes

The place you and your family call home could potentially be hazardous to your health.

Texas does not currently require home sellers or landlords to disclose whether or not their homes have been used as a methamphetamine lab. The immediate damage of a meth lab busts are easy to see, but after all the physical hazardous materials are removed, NewsChannel 10's Stephanae Benson discovered what meth makers are leaving behind, mini toxic dump sites.

So she knocked on doors throughout Amarillo to find out how much current residents know about their homes history, and many locals had no idea their homes were once meth labs.

"No, I wasn't told that. How do you feel knowing that information now?...I don't know, I think they should have told us, so I don't know." said Jessica Alexander whose been living in an apartment that was used as a meth lab since July.

"My landlord told me a little bit about it, he just said the people who used to live here had a little bit of a lab, but i didn't think it was nothing major." said Amy Pogolerec who is also living in a former meth lab with her 3 young children and one on the way.

So we teamed up with Bill Coye owner of Apex Bio Clean, a crime scene clean-up company and we tested a home that had been used as a meth lab in 2004 to see if it was still contaminated.

The entire home was tested, our results... shocking. The home was contaminated with high levels of methamphetamines, 3 years after the bust.

How does that make you feel? Pogolerec tellus us, "that scares me cause I have kids in my house and I don't want any type of contamination with them inside of there."

Health officials say even low level exposure to those living in homes contaminated with meth have been linked to respiratory disease, birth defects, brain damage and cancer. Children, the most at risk.

"I have a 7 month old baby and I don't know if the chemicals are still in this apartment, I don't know when it happened, but I should have been notified about it." Alexander added.

If you think your home may have been used as a meth lab, you can have it tested by following the links on this page.

Also a new law going into effect January of 2008 will require home sellers to disclose whether or not their home was previously used as a meth lab to a potential buyer, but a loophole in the law doesn't protect the renter.

"I would think that the landlords would be required to disclose that, if they didn't include that in the law then that's a pretty bad oversight." said David Grimes a Local Realty Broker.

Coye Agrees.

"This is a gigantic public health issue; we don't know what methamphetamine will do to people's health over time. Pick up that bottle, it's got a skull and cross bones on it for a reason, mix that all up and what kind of witches brew is that really, I'm surprised people aren't jumping up and down more demanding disclosure laws especially with the renters, these are children's lives, how could we not provide safe environments for our families to live in."