

## **NEWS Release**

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### **What Every Homeowner Needs to Know About Radon**

**Wampsville, NY** – January is National Radon Action Month and the Madison County Health Department would like you to resolve this New Year to take action and know the radon level in your home.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas produced by decaying uranium that you cannot see or smell. Breathing in high levels of radon gas can cause lung cancer over time. Radon gas is present in nearly all soils, and very low levels of radon are found in the air we breathe every day. Madison County is a known high risk area for radon. Testing is the only way to know if radon gas is impacting your home air quality.

Radon becomes a problem and health threat to you and your family when radon gas enters your home and becomes trapped. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., after smoking. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that lung cancer caused by radon exposure kills about 21,000 Americans every year.

#### **1. How does radon enter your house?**

Radon gas moves from the soil into a home. Any house, of any age, in any state can have elevated radon levels. Radon can leak through cracks in your basement or slab, through the dirt floor of your crawl space, or through openings around your sump pump. It really depends on the way your specific house interacts with the surrounding soil. Your neighbor's radon level may differ from yours. Testing is the **ONLY** way to know if your house has high radon levels.

#### **2. How do you test your home for radon?**

Short and long-term tests are available. Testing is recommended in the lowest livable area of your home that is regularly used. Radon tests are divided into short-term tests (less than 90 days, typically 2 to 7 days) and long-term tests, from 3 to 12 months.

The most commonly used device for making short-term radon measurements in homes is the charcoal canister. Take the average of two charcoal canister measurements to guide a decision to mitigate.



Another type of test is the continuous electronic radon monitor. These devices generally produce more precise radon measurements, however they are more expensive and should only be used by certified professional radon testing firms. Continuous radon monitors are often used during real estate transactions, because they are more tamper resistant than charcoal canisters.

### **3. What should you do if your house has high levels of radon?**

If an initial short-term test registers 4 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher, the EPA recommends doing a second radon test. A long-term test will give you the most accurate information, but if a second short-term test registers above 4 pCi/L, consider taking steps to reduce radon levels in your home.

### **4. You can fix a radon problem with a mitigation system**

A radon mitigation system vents your home by using PVC piping to draw radon gas up from the soil and out of your house. A list of certified radon mitigation contractors is available on the NYS Department of Health website at

[https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/radiological/radon/mitigation/county\\_map.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/radiological/radon/mitigation/county_map.htm)

Screen your home for radon. FREE radon test kits are available to eligible homeowners from Madison County Health Department, while supplies last. To learn more, including how to get a free or low-cost radon detector, contact Madison County Health Department at 366-2526 or visit

[www.healthymadisoncounty.org](http://www.healthymadisoncounty.org).

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