



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

St. Joseph County Department of Health

"Promoting physical and mental health and facilitating the prevention of disease, injury and disability for all St. Joseph County residents"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH IN THEIR HOMES **RADON – A SILENT KILLER**

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY – The St. Joseph County Department of Health is participating in a nationwide campaign to educate residents about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to take action to protect their homes and families. In our community, the Department of Health is providing educational materials and a free, easy-to-use radon test kit during National Radon Action Month in January.

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air but which can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Exposure to radon increases the risk of lung cancer. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. (behind smoking) and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year.

Radon usually enters homes through cracks in floors and through basement sumps. In St. Joseph County, 1 out of 4 homes contains radon at elevated levels.

The Department of Health urges residents to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. The Department of Health recommends the following:

- Know what your risk is. Test the lowest floor in your residence (i.e., ground floor or basement) for radon levels.
- If the radon levels are higher than 4 pCi/L (four picoCuries per liter of air), the EPA recommends mitigation.
- If the radon levels are 2-4 pCi/L, you should consider mitigation. For those who smoke or have a bedroom in the basement or use the basement extensively, the risks associated with radon exposure are increased, and the Department of Health strongly recommends that you consider mitigation.
- Use a licensed radon mitigation company. The State of Indiana requires licensing for radon mitigation contractors.
- If you are building a home, have your builder install a radon mitigation system. Some homebuilders already do this.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores or directly from radon testing companies. The Department of Health has a limited supply of free test kits that can be obtained at the Environmental Division on the 9th floor of the County-City building.

For more information on radon and radon testing, call Cassy White at (574) 245-6721, or visit our website at <http://sjcindiana.com/1756/Radon-Awareness-Information> or visit EPA's National Radon Action Month website at www.epa.gov/radon.

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