



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Radon Gas Causes More Than 20,000 Lung Cancer Deaths in the Country Each Year; 48% of Homes Tested in Champaign County have High Radon Levels

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Encourages Citizens to Test Their Homes with a Radon Test Kit

CHAMPAIGN, IL – January is National Radon Action Month and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) encourages citizens to learn more about the threat of radon and to test their homes for the presence of radon. CUPHD has radon test kits available for \$6.50. Test kits may be picked up at the Environmental Health Division of CUPHD located at 201 West Kenyon Road in Champaign; kits are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. A free t-shirt is also available with purchase until supplies run out.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), exposure to indoor radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released into the air from decaying matter in rocks, soil and water. While levels in outdoor air are relatively harmless, radon can accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. Radon is an invisible threat; it cannot be seen, smelled or tasted. The only way to detect radon is to perform a radon test.

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The test kits provided by CUPHD are safe and easy to use. Simply open the test kit, and place the radon detector in a designated area in the home for a minimum of 48 hours, with windows and doors closed. After 48 hours, place the detector in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and send it to a lab for a free analysis. The lab will then inform you of your radon test results.

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L). The EPA recommends that homes with radon levels of 4 pCi/L or higher should be mitigated. Nationally the average home reading is about 1.3 pCi/L. The average outdoor reading is about 0.4 pCi/L. **Forty-eight percent of homes tested in Champaign County have high radon levels.**

Radon presents a serious health risk, but it can be controlled easily and cost-effectively. If a high radon level is detected in your home, you can take steps to fix the problem to protect yourself and your family. Test your home and protect your health today.

For more information on radon or radon test kits for your home, please contact CUPHD at (217) 373-7900 or visit CUPHD on the web at www.c-uphd.org/radon.

CUPHD also recommends schools test their buildings since kids and teachers spend a majority of their time at school. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) has a School Screening Program available to help schools with the cost of performing radon testing. "To reduce the cost to school districts for the radon tests, the Illinois School Code allows school district employees to complete an online training course approved by IEMA in order to perform screening measurements in their district school buildings. By using a trained school district employee to conduct the tests, districts won't have the expense of hiring a licensed radon measurement contractor." (from the IEMA website).

For more information on the School screening program, please visit <https://www.illinois.gov/iema/NRS/Radon/Pages/SchoolScreeningProgram.aspx> or contact Patrick Daniels at IEMA, patrick.daniels@illinois.gov.

The American Lung Association working with IEMA is having their annual radon awareness poster and video contests. Students can win prize money for the top posters and videos.

Links to last year's winners of the poster and video contests (video and pictures included):

<https://www.lung.org/local-content/il/radon-poster>

<https://www.lung.org/local-content/il/radon-video>