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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**January is National Radon Action Month**

**GRAND RAPIDS** - This time of year, people may be getting the highest doses of radon with every indoor breath they take. That makes January the best time to test your home for radon. Nationwide, the estimated number of homes that have elevated levels of radon is 1 in 15; in Michigan, nearly 1 in 8 homes could have a radon problem.

The Surgeon General says radon is the second biggest cause of lung cancer in the United States, responsible for 20,000 deaths from lung cancer annually. Only cigarette smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. Radon is colorless, odorless and tasteless. Without testing, the residents would never know radon is in their home.

Radon is a naturally-occurring radioactive gas found in rocks and soil. It seeps into buildings through cracks or openings in the foundation of floors and walls, around sump openings, or spaces around plumbing. It occurs in both new and old homes, or houses built over a basement, over a crawlspace or built on slab-on-grade.

“We know, based on the geology of Michigan, that homes here are at a much higher risk of having radon issues,” says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Once you know there is a problem, there are several ways to eliminate this risk and protect your family.” The Environmental Protection Agency offers tips for those who can “do-it-yourself.” The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality suggests if you hire a contractor, seek a professional that has been certified by the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) and the National Radon Safety Board (NRSB).

The Kent County Health Department recommends testing homes for radon, and sells self-testing kits for \$5 each. You just hang a small filter in your home for several days, and mail it for testing in a pre-paid envelope. You will receive the results within a few weeks. Tests are available at the Kent County Health Department, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., at 700 Fuller NE, in Grand Rapids. For more information, call (616) 632-6900. More information about radon is available at the EPA website: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/index.html>.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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