



KENDALL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Public Service Announcement

Date: January 16, 2017

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Dangers of Radon Exposure in Your Home

Radon is a colorless, odorless radioactive gas produced by the decay of uranium found within our soil, a natural and expected occurrence. Kendall County's geology is rich in uranium deposits, capable of producing high levels of radon gas. In the outdoor environment, radon gas readily escapes the ground, quickly dissipating into the air, without risk of human exposure. However, radon gas can enter homes and other buildings through cracks and voids in basement and slab foundations, and poorly sealed crawlspace floors, where the gas can concentrate to harmful levels. Decades of scientific research have shown a strong correlation between breathing harmful concentrations of radon gas - over long periods of time - with an increased risk of developing lung cancer. In fact, radon gas is considered the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency considers a harmful level of radon gas, known as the indoor radon gas 'action limit', to be an indoor radon concentration meeting or exceeding 4 pCi/L (picocuries-per-liter). Local indoor radon test data assembled by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency over the last ten years reveals an alarming statistic: *47% of the indoor radon tests performed in Kendall County homes shows results at or above the action limit.* So, if exposure to indoor radon gas over an extended period of time greatly increases the risk of one developing lung cancer, and we know that radon gas is prevalent throughout Kendall County, what can and should we do?

The answer and effort is simple: test your home to find out if you and your family are at risk! The good news is that exposure to radon gas is preventable. Testing is safe and easy; you can even do it yourself. Low-cost short-term test kits are available at the Kendall County Health Department; they can also be purchased from local home and hardware stores.

Should you discover that you are at risk of exposure to harmful levels of indoor radon gas, there are steps that can be taken to reduce radon concentrations to acceptable levels. If your results show a radon level meeting or exceeding the 4 pCi/l EPA action limit, please give us a call; we may be able to provide some low cost starting points for reducing if not eliminating your risk. We can also provide contact information for local licensed radon mitigation professionals that can help you mitigate your risk.

Please feel free to call the Kendall County Health Department at 630-553-9100 or visit us on our website at www.kendallhealth.org

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