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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Test Your Home for Radon:  
January is National Radon Awareness Month**

**GRAND RAPIDS** – Michigan has a specific geology that creates a dangerous risk in one out of every eight homes: radon lurks in the ground. With windows closed and air re-circulating throughout the home, this time of year puts people at the highest risk of radon exposure with every indoor breath they take. January is National Radon Awareness Month. Radon is the second biggest cause of lung cancer in the United States according to the U.S. Surgeon General, blamed for 20,000 deaths from lung cancer annually. Only cigarette smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. Radon is colorless, odorless and tasteless. Without testing, residents may 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. “While nationally, the estimated number of homes that have elevated levels of radon is 1 in 15, here in Michigan, the risk is almost double the national average, says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “Kent County is considered to have an elevated, moderate potential for radon, according to the EPA. Testing is quick, simple, and can bring peace of mind.”

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 prepaid 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.

If you determine there is a radon 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).

More information about radon is available at the EPA website: <http://www.epa.gov/radon/index.html>. Check out the risks county-by-county at <http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/statemaps/michigan.pdf>.

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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 three satellite clinics located in 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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