

# Madison County Health Department Announces Availability Of Radon Test Kits

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WOOD RIVER — You may already know that smoking is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer in the United States. But do you know what's No. 2?

Radon — a naturally occurring, invisible, radioactive gas.

[Madison County Health Department](#) would like the public to know January is National Radon Action Month and is emphasizing the importance of getting your home tested.

“Madison County Health Department is offering radon test kits for \$10 (cash or check) each for residents, while supplies last, to check the radon level in their home,” Public Health Administrator Doug King said.

Radon gas forms naturally in the ground. Most radon mixes harmlessly with outdoor air that we all breathe in low levels every day. Radon from underground seeps into a home through cracks and gaps in the foundation and becomes trapped inside.

Over time, breathing indoor air with high radon levels can damage the lungs and lead to cancer.

“In the United States, about 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year are caused by radon exposure,” King said.

King said radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer among smokers.

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, and invisible gas that occurs naturally in the soil. Radon is produced by the natural breakdown of uranium and radium in rock formations and it enters a home by moving up from the soil and through cracks and holes in the foundation.

“With the presence of radon in this geographic area, we encourage residents to test for radon in their homes,” Health Protection Division Director Erin Boester said.

Boester said things such as sump pits, foundation cracks, gaps in suspended floors, construction joints and exposed soil in crawl spaces are areas where radon may find a route into a home. She said although a much smaller risk, radon could also enter a home through ground water obtained from water wells.

“Once inside a home, radon gas can build up and create a hazard,” she said. “The only way for homeowners to know if radon is present is to test for it.”

Residents can purchase radon test kits for \$10 each (cash or check), which all testing fees and pre-paid postage to mail the kit for your results. Residents can visit the Health Department to purchase a test kit on Wednesdays and Fridays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 101 E. Edwardsville Road in Wood River.

King said when residents pick up a test kit a staff member will assist them with the instructions on how to use it, as well as give information regarding radon, radon measurement, and radon mitigation.

Should radon test results show a high level of radon in a home, MCHD can provide residents with a list of licensed radon measurement professionals and licensed radon mitigation professionals for follow-up.

For more information about radon test kits, contact MCHD at (618) 296-6079.

Visit Madison County Health Department's website at <http://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/health/radon.php> or IEMA at <https://www2.illinois.gov/iema/NRS/Radon/Pages/default.aspxat> for more information about radon.

Visit <https://www.epa.gov/radon> for more information about National Radon Action Month.