

Cortland County
Environmental Health
 Web: <http://cehd.cortland-co.org>

Fall 2017
 Phone: (607)753-5035

The U.S. Surgeon General recommends ALL homes be tested for radon gas

RADON: A HEALTH CONCERN IN CORTLAND COUNTY

Cortland County has the highest average basement and first floor radon readings in NYS

Breathing radon in your home can cause lung cancer!

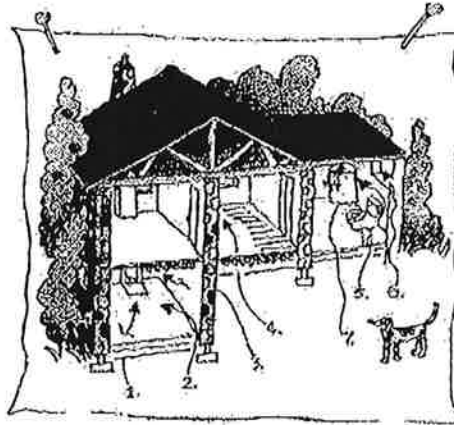
Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil and water that can build up to dangerous levels inside any home; this means new and old homes, well sealed and drafty homes, and homes with or without a basement. Radon gas is odorless and invisible and the only way to know if your home has a radon problem is to test for it.

Breathing radon can increase your risk of lung cancer. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among people who do not smoke. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer for people who do. EPA estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 deaths from lung cancer each year in the U.S. If you smoke and your home has a high radon level, your risk of lung cancer can increase even more.

Radon is a serious health risk. It can be reduced easily and cost-effectively. FREE Radon Test Kits are available to all Cortland County residents through Environmental Health. For further information call 753-5035



How does Radon get into my home?



RADON GETS IN THROUGH:

1. Cracks in solid floors
2. Construction joints
3. Cracks in walls
4. Gaps in suspended floors
5. Gaps around service pipes
6. Cavities inside walls
7. The water supply

Air pressure inside your home is usually lower than pressure in the soil around your home's foundation. When radon gas is present in the soil, your house acts like a vacuum and draws radon in through cracks and other openings.

The radon gas can enter a home or building through dirt floors, sump pumps, hollow block walls, cracks in the foundation floor and walls, and openings around floor drain pipes. Radon is often highly concentrated in basements, and first floors of homes.

How is Radon Measured?

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), a measurement of radioactivity. In the United States, the average indoor radon level is about 1.3 pCi/L. The average outdoor level is about 0.4 pCi/L. The U.S. Surgeon General and EPA recommend fixing homes with radon levels at or above 4 pCi/L. EPA also recommends that people think about fixing their homes for radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L.

The Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP) also provides radon kits to those living in Cortland County. HNP staff will come to your home to assist you with setting up the radon test kit, as well as providing education about radon and radon mitigation. They can also provide other services that help in making your home safer. For more information, please call 607-428-5210.