

News Column for week of January 13, 2020

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Is Radon A Real Problem?

January is both Kansas Radon Action Month and National Radon Action Month (sponsored nationally by the EPA).

Radon is a natural, tasteless, odorless, colorless, radioactive gas produced from the decay of uranium found in nearly all soils. Radon gas moves from the ground under and around your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation. Nearly one out of every 15 homes in the U.S. is estimated to have elevated radon levels. The only way to know the radon level in your home is to test.

Radon testing results in Kansas show there is a need for more testing. Current data indicates that one in four houses in Kansas may have elevated levels. In some counties this rate may be higher.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers. Given the increased potential for lung cancer the radon hazard brings, Kansans should be asking themselves, "Have we tested our home yet?"

Nationally, radon contributes to about 21,000 deaths per year from lung cancer. The risk of developing lung cancer increases as the concentration and length of exposure to radon increases. Many scientists believe children may run an even greater risk from radon exposure than adults, and smokers are definitely at greater risk than nonsmokers.

The Surgeon General's Office, the American Lung Association, the American Medical Association, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognize that indoor radon constitutes a substantial health risk. They have publicly advised that all homes be tested. **Winter is an excellent time for Kansas residents to test their homes for radon.**

Radon is an environmental health hazard that you can act against. Why ignore it? Why not remove all doubt? Test for radon now. Affordable Radon test kits are available in each of the Southwind Extension District offices for \$6.00 per test kit.

For more information, call Kathy in the Southwind Extension District's Iola Office at 620-365-2242. You can also call the Kansas Radon Program at 1-800-693-5343, or visit their Web site at <http://www.kansasradonprogram.org>.