



Manitowoc County Health Department

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Manitowoc County Health Department Urges Residents to Test Their Homes for Radon

January is National Radon Action Month and the Manitowoc County Health Department is encouraging everyone in Manitowoc County to learn more about radon and how to protect you and your family from exposure. Radon is an odorless radioactive gas naturally present in the ground and can enter buildings through their foundations.

Exposure to radon gas is one of the major contributors to lung cancer nationally, yet many people are not aware that an easy-to-use test kit can tell them if their home has high radon levels. Radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer overall and the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. Radon causes more lung cancer among non-smokers than second-hand tobacco smoke. An estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year among non-smokers can be linked to radon exposure, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Surgeon General. Exposure to high levels of radon over long periods of time can cause lung cancer.

About one out of every ten homes in Wisconsin has high radon levels. Any home, whether old, new, with or without a basement can have radon. Since you cannot smell, taste, or see radon, the only way to know if you have high radon levels is to test for it.

Testing for radon is easy and inexpensive. Short-term radon test kits are available from the Manitowoc County Health Department for \$8.25. Analysis is included in this price. To obtain a test kit, just stop in at the Manitowoc County Health Department at 1028 S. 9th Street, Manitowoc or call (920) 683-4155. Mail order test kits are also available for an additional postage charge of \$8.50 for up to 6 kits.

There are over 100 nationally certified radon mitigation contractors in Wisconsin that can install radon mitigation systems if elevated radon levels are found. Thousands of systems are installed in existing homes in Wisconsin each year. Newly constructed homes should include features recommended by the National Association of Home Builders to reduce radon entry.

For additional information on local radon levels by zip code, testing, health risk and reducing radon levels in a house, look at the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services website at www.lowradon.org.