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Healthy Homes, Healthy Families

Did you know people spend about 90 percent of their time indoors? It is important that the air in your home be healthy and safe. You can help keep your family safe by learning about radon. October 17th -23rd is Radon Action and Awareness Week, and a great time to test your home.

Why should we be concerned about radon? According to a survey conducted by the Michigan Department of Public Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 12 percent of the homes in Michigan (1 in 8 homes) would be expected to have an elevated indoor radon level. Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that is made naturally in the soil and rock. Radon can enter homes through cracks in the foundation, plumbing or other openings. Radon is a Class A (cancer causing) carcinogen. Radon is dangerous to everyone, but it is especially dangerous to young children because their bodies are still developing. Once radon enters a home, the radon particles can be inhaled and stick to lung tissue. If enough radon is inhaled over a long period of time, it can cause cancer. If the home is also contaminated with secondhand smoke, the chances of getting cancer increase. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's most recent health risk assessment estimates that 21,000 lung cancer

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Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) program staff at MSU Extension can answer questions or help you learn more about money management, parent, food, nutrition and health issues. MSU Extension educators integrate university and community resources to provide tools that help families succeed. For more information on FCS programs in Michigan, call your county MSU Extension office. Check the government pages of your phone book for contact information.

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deaths each year are due to radon, and a report by the Michigan Public Health Institute estimated that more than 600 new lung cancer cases in one year in Michigan could be attributed to radon.

What can you do about radon? Test your home. Radon tests are inexpensive, easy to use and can be obtained from your local health department or local hardware store. Radon tests can be done in as little as 48 hours and will not disrupt your family's daily life. Fall and winter are the best time to test your home for radon because the weather will allow you to shut your windows and be comfortable.

Radon testing should be done in every home no matter where it is located in Michigan. It doesn't matter if your home is in the city or country, or if it is large or small. Elevated radon levels have been found in every county in Michigan. Protect your family by making sure the air in your home is healthy. Test your home for radon today.

For more information on this topic and other indoor air quality issues contact the MSU Extension Office. MSU Extension Family and Consumer Science educators are located in all 83 Michigan counties to integrate university and community resources to help families succeed.

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