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Test Your Home For Radon Gas: Darien Health Department Has Free Test Kits

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The Darien Health Department advises residents to test their homes for radon gas especially now that many families are spending more time at home due to COVID-19. Limited numbers of free test kits are now available at the Darien Health Department office.

— *an announcement from Darien Health Department*

Radon is a naturally occurring, invisible, odorless, tasteless radioactive gas that is found throughout the US. Most of the time, it is harmlessly dispersed in outdoor air, but it can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings.

Exposure to elevated levels of radon has been shown to cause lung damage and cancer in humans. In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung

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cancer deaths per year. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

The only way to know if you have an elevated radon level is to test your home's indoor air. Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased through the American Lung Association (see below) or at home improvement stores for under \$25, or can be obtained for free at the Darien Health Department.

When discovered, radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors at a reasonable cost by the installation of ventilation systems, sealing entry routes for radon gas and/or installing sub-slab depressurization systems to reduce radon levels.

Radon gas is drawn into a house through foundation cracks and openings, such as sump pump pits and plumbing features. The lower levels of your home tend to have the highest levels of radon and pose the highest risk.

Radon levels vary seasonally and tend to be higher in the winter months. The best time to test for radon is during the winter when the home is closed up and the furnace is running.

The US EPA recommends that homes with radon levels at 4 or more picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air have mitigation systems installed. Even if the radon test result is below 4 pCi/L, additional testing should be done at some point in the future, especially if you occupy the lower level of your home, or planning a renovation, such as converting an unfinished basement area into living space.

Please call the Darien Health Department at 203-656-7320 to arrange picking up your test kit today!

For more information, visit these Web pages:

—[The Connecticut Department of Public Health Radon Program](#)

—[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Consumers Guide to Radon Reduction](#) (a PDF)