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It's Time to Test Your Home for Radon *PSHD Encourages Residents to Test for Radon*

You can't see radon and you can't smell it or taste it. But it can be a problem in your home. Radon can be found in the air and can enter homes and buildings through cracks in floors, walls, or foundations. Radon can also be found in well water. Radon is a significant health threat throughout Connecticut. Testing is the only way to know if your home has elevated radon levels, and winter is the perfect time to test your home. The Plainville Southington Health District (PSHD) encourages residents to test their homes for radon and to reduce elevated levels of radon if detected.

Radon gas is an odorless, colorless radioactive gas. Radon comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water and gets into the air you breathe. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon causes more than 21,000 lung cancer deaths in the country each year.

“Because radon is impossible to smell, people tend to minimize the health effects and ignore the possibility that it might exist in elevated levels in their homes,” said Shane Lockwood, PSHD Director of Health. “Residents can decrease their risk by testing their

homes and reducing elevated radon levels when found. Testing is simple and inexpensive and is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk of exposure to radon gas in your home.”

It is recommended that you test the lowest living area of your home; therefore, if you have a finished basement, you should conduct the test in the basement. Testing should be conducted between January and March, when windows and doors are closed and heating systems are turned on.

The DPH Radon Program recommends that all Connecticut homes be tested for radon. Radon test kits that meet EPA guidelines are available at local hardware stores, home improvement stores, other retail outlets, or directly from a laboratory. Kits can also be ordered online from the National Radon Program Services at <http://sosradon.org/test-kits> or by calling the American Lung Association of New England at 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872).

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends that homes with radon levels at or above 4.0 pCi/L be fixed. Homeowners should consider reducing their potential lung cancer risk by fixing homes with radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L.

Smokers exposed to radon have a much higher risk for developing lung cancer.

Elevated radon levels can be addressed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that for many common home repairs such as painting or having a new water heater installed (anywhere from \$1200-\$1500).

For more information on radon, radon testing, and radon mitigation, visit the CT Department of Public Health Radon Program website at www.ct.gov/dph/radon or call (860) 509-7367 or visit www.epa.gov/radon. A list of qualified radon contractors can be obtained by calling PSHD at 860-276-6275.

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The mission of the Plainville Southington Health District is to preserve, protect, promote, and improve the quality of life in a healthy environment through the prevention of disease, ongoing health education opportunities and the enhancement of the well-being of its residents.