

**JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

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Free Radon Test Kit Distribution

Watertown, NY – January is National Radon Action Month and the Jefferson County Public Health Service (JCPHS) would like to remind residents to test their homes for radon. JCPHS has a limited number of radon test kits to give to county residents at no-cost. Interested individuals may come to the JCPHS facility, fill out a one-page form and receive a radon test kit. The test kit comes with instructions for testing, instructions for mailing and a postage paid envelope to mail the test to the laboratory. The laboratory will send results directly to the individual.

You cannot see, smell or taste radon gas, so the only way to know if you have high radon levels in your home is to test. Radon is released naturally from rocks and dirt under the ground. It can get into homes through cracks and gaps and build up in our indoor air. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Overall, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year. People who smoke cigarettes and have high radon levels in their home have a ten times greater chance of developing lung cancer compared to non-smokers without high radon levels.

About 23% of homes tested in Jefferson County have radon levels above 4 pCi/L, which is the EPA’s “action level,” meaning people should have a system installed in their home to lower those radon levels. In addition, about 19% of homes tested in Jefferson County have levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L, where the EPA suggests homeowners consider taking action. More data can be found on the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\) Radon webpage](#).

“Exposure to radon is the number one cause of lung cancer is people who have never smoked. People who are smokers and are being exposed to radon have at least a 10 times higher risk of getting lung cancer. It is important to test your home,” explains Faith Lustik, Director of Preventive Service.

It is best to test homes during the colder seasons, when homes typically let in less outdoor air. Homes should be tested every 5 years, or after major renovations, weatherization, or installation of a radon mitigation system.

If your test shows that you have high radon levels in your home, you should contact a certified radon mitigator. A list of certified radon mitigators can be found on the NYSDOH website.

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