



# Tidbit Times

January 2013

## January is Radon Action Month

Are you and your children breathing in radon? How would you know? You can't see it, taste it or smell it. The best way to know for sure is to test your home.

Radon is a radioactive gas that can seep into homes through pores and cracks in concrete slabs and walls, mortar joints, open tops of block walls or around sump pumps. Exposure to radon in the home is responsible for an estimated 20,000 lung cancer deaths each year. In fact, the US Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Only smoking causes more

lung cancer deaths. If you smoke and your home has high radon levels, your risk of lung cancer is especially high.

Testing your home is easy. To start out, short term test kits can be found at hardware stores or can be purchased from the Division of Public Health.

Follow the instructions that come with your test kit. The test kit should be placed in the lowest lived-in level of the home (for example, the basement if it is frequently used, otherwise the first floor). It should be put in a room that is used regularly (like a living room, playroom, den or bedroom)

but not your kitchen, bathroom or utility room. Place the kit at least 20 inches above the floor in a location where it won't be disturbed - away from drafts, high heat, high humidity, and exterior walls. Leave the kit in place for as long as the package says. Once you've finished the test, reseal the package and send it to the lab specified on the package right away for analysis. You should receive your test results within a few weeks.

Depending on the test results, you may either be finished testing at that point or encouraged to confirm the test with another short

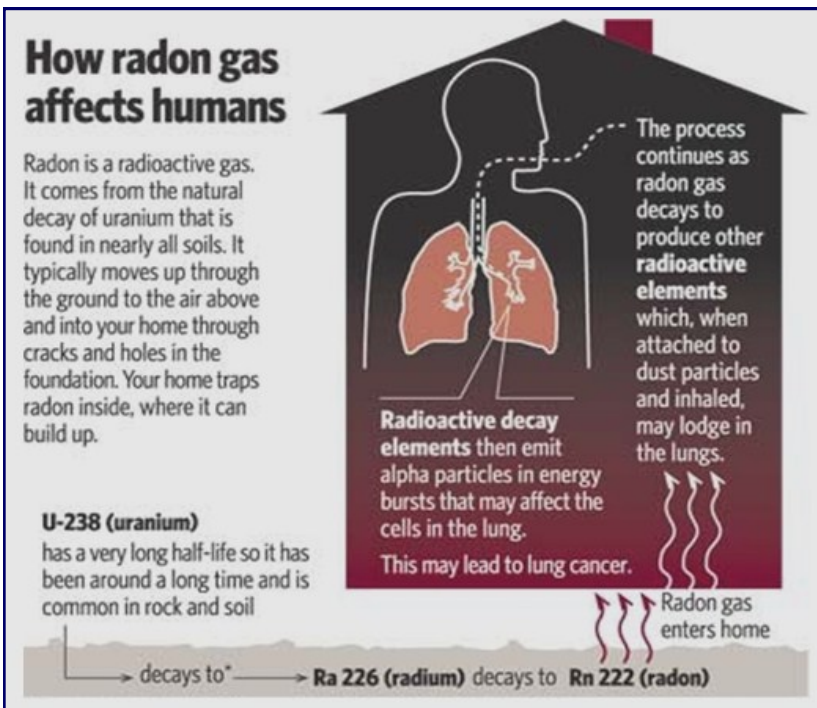
term kit or a long term test kit. If the results show high radon levels in your home, mitigation can be done to vent the gas and reduce the amount of radon in the air your family breathes. Both existing homes and new homes can be made radon-safe. It's never too late to reduce your family's risk of

lung cancer. Don't wait to test and fix a radon problem.

For more information on radon testing and mitigation call 1-888-LOW-RADON or visit [www.lowradon.org](http://www.lowradon.org).

For a \$10.00 test kit from Public Health, stop in at the address below, Monday – Friday, 8:00-Noon and 1:00-4:30.

In addition, if you are a smoker, make a New Year's resolution to stop smoking. Until you can quit, smoke outside to help your family breathe easier in the New Year.



Graphic from [www.radonmonth.org](http://www.radonmonth.org)

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Use the Nutrition Facts Label to Eat Healthier this New Year

- ◆ Check the serving size and number of servings.
- ◆ The information is based on ONE serving, but many packages contain more. Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually consuming.
- ◆ When you compare calories and nutrients between brands, check to see if the serving size is the same.

- ◆ This is where you'll find the number of calories per serving and the calories from fat in each serving. If the label lists that 1 serving equals 3 cookies and 100 calories, and you eat 6 cookies, you've eaten 2 servings, or twice the number of calories and fat.

- ◆ Use the label to select foods that are lowest in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- ◆ Low fat food contain 3 grams or less of total fat per 100 calories. Aim for foods low in saturated fat and avoid *trans* fat altogether.
- ◆ Most Americans eat too much sodium. Look for lower sodium choices when comparing labels. A low sodium food has less than 140 mg per serving. Processed foods tend to be high in sodium.

- ◆ Fiber and sugars are types of carbohydrates. Healthy sources, like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains, can reduce the risk of heart disease and aid in digestion.
- ◆ There isn't a % Daily Value for sugar. Use it to compare the sugar content in grams among products. Limit foods with added sugars (sucrose, glucose, fructose, corn or maple syrup), which add "empty" calories but not other nutrients. Make sure that added sugars are not one of the first few items in the ingredients list.

- ◆ Most Americans get plenty of protein, but not always from the healthiest sources. When choosing a food for its protein content, such as meat, poultry, dry beans, and dairy products, make choices that are lean, low-fat, or fat free.

- ◆ Look for foods that are rich in these nutrients, including potassium, listed above. Use the label not only to limit fat and sodium, but also to increase these nutrients that promote good health and may protect you from disease.
- ◆ Get the most nutrition for your calories—compare the calories to the nutrients you would be getting to make a healthier food choice.

Amount Per Serving		Calories from Fat 110	
		% Daily Value*	
<b>Calories</b>	250		
<b>Total Fat</b>	12g		18%
Saturated Fat	3g		15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat	3g		
<b>Cholesterol</b>	30mg		10%
<b>Sodium</b>	470mg		20%
<b>Potassium</b>	700mg		20%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	31g		10%
Dietary Fiber	0g		0%
Sugars	5g		
<b>Protein</b>	5g		
<b>Vitamin A</b>			4%
<b>Vitamin C</b>			2%
<b>Calcium</b>			20%
<b>Iron</b>			4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

- ◆ Percent Daily Values are a gauge to help you see if a food is high or low in a nutrient: 5% or less is low, 20% or more is high.

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm266853.htm>

## Bundle up, Keep Warm and Safe

Frostbite is damage to the skin and tissues caused by extreme cold. It most often affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes. A wind chill around  $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$  could cause frostbite in just 15 minutes or less. In addition to Winter Storm Watches and Warnings the National Weather Service also warns against the dangers of wind chill.

### Symptoms of frostbite include:

- ◆ Pins and needles feeling followed by numbness
- ◆ Hard, pale, and cold skin
- ◆ The area may ache or throb
- ◆ Lack of sensation; you may not feel it if someone touches you
- ◆ As the area thaws, the flesh becomes red and very painful
- ◆ Very severe frostbite may cause blisters, gangrene (blackened, dead tissue) or even damage to tendons, muscles, nerves, and bone. [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov)

**Wind Chill Advisory:** wind chills between  $-20$  and  $-34$  combined with winds.

**Wind Chill Warning:** wind chills below  $-35$  or colder combined with winds.

Wear suitable clothing in cold temperatures and limit the amount of

time your children are exposed to very cold conditions. If you must be outside, cover as much skin as possible, use mittens instead of gloves and always wear a hat to keep heat from leaving the scalp. If you see symptoms of frostbite, seek medical care.

