



# Department of Health

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*Interim Commissioner of Health*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Radon Risk in Putnam County Remains High;** *January is Radon Action Month*

BREWSTER, NY—January is designated as Radon Action Month by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The risks tend to be higher during the cold winter months when homes are more tightly closed up or sealed, but exposure to radon continues year round. Radon is a colorless, odorless gas and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers in the U.S. For those who smoke, it increases the risk of cancer.

“Radon occurs naturally in the environment,” says County Executive MaryEllen Odell, “and Putnam County is located in an area found to have high levels. Testing your home is a good idea.” According to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), 32 percent of homes in Putnam are estimated to have radon levels high enough that steps should be taken to fix the problem.

“Radon definitely contributes to the high lung cancer death rate in Putnam County,” says Interim Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD. “Smoking is not the only cause. To find out if you have high radon levels, the only way is to test your home. We always advise residents to perform tests.”

Radon develops from the radioactive decay of uranium or thorium in the soil and it can seep into homes or ground water. If the level within a home tests high, action can be taken to reduce it. Repair costs vary and sometimes a simple solution can correct a problem. New homes can now be built using radon-resistant construction.

Radon testing kits are inexpensive and easy to get. The NYSDOH sells testing kits by mail for \$11 (includes lab testing fee) to New York State residents, or they can be bought at local home and hardware

stores. Test kits remain in the home for a few days and then are sealed and mailed in for analysis. Results are usually returned to the homeowner within a few weeks.

For more information about radon, or to order a kit (NYS residents only), visit the [New York State Department of Health website](#) or the [New York Radon Information website](#).

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our County website at [www.putnamcountyny.com](http://www.putnamcountyny.com) ; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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