

Putnam County Remains a High Risk Radon Zone

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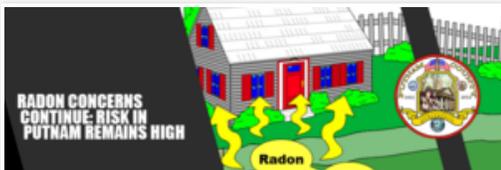
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Written by Putnam County Health Dept.



Test Your Home and Protect Your Health

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in the United States among non-smokers. For those who smoke, radon greatly increases the cancer risk. This naturally occurring odorless gas claims the lives of about 21,000 Americans each year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA designates January as National Radon Action Month and encourages all Americans to protect their health by testing their homes, schools and other buildings for radon. Radon however is a concern year-round.

Radon can easily accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. The natural decay of uranium leads to the release of radon in rock, soil and water. High levels of radon in homes usually come from the surrounding soil. Radon gas from the soil enters buildings through cracks and openings. The EPA has identified Putnam County as a “high risk” radon zone. However, the only way to know if you have high radon levels in your home is to test it.

“The good news is that you can perform a simple, at-home test to discover your radon levels, and elevated radon levels in your home can be corrected,” says Interim Health Commissioner Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD. “With the high rates of lung cancer in Putnam County, we absolutely must talk about radon and take it seriously. Radon-resistant construction can be utilized when building new homes but older homes must be tested. Remember, just because your neighbor’s house has safe levels of radon does not mean that your house is also safe.”

For \$11, which includes the lab fee, the NYSDOH offers short-term radon testing kits. The test remains in the home for a few days and then the kit is sealed and mailed in for analysis. Results are typically returned to the homeowner within a few weeks. At-home radon test kits can also be purchased inexpensively at local home and hardware stores. If elevated levels are found there are various corrective measures, ranging in cost. To learn more about radon, order a test kit or discover mitigation options, visit the [New York State Department of Health website](#) or [New York Radon Information website](#).

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