



**MEDIA REQUESTS:**  
Janenne Irene Pung, PIO  
231-547-7653  
[media@nwhealth.org](mailto:media@nwhealth.org)  
[www.nwhealth.org](http://www.nwhealth.org)

**January 3, 2023**  
**Health Department of Northwest Michigan**

### **Tasteless and Odorless**

*HDNW giving out free, at-home radon test kits*

When a gas is odorless and tasteless, how do you know if it's reaching dangerous levels in your home? You test for it.

January is National Radon Action Month, and the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) is again helping area residents [ensure safe radon levels](#) in their homes, schools, and offices by offering free test kits. The annual campaign is called "Give a Can, Get a Kit." To participate, residents exchange nonperishable food for a free radon test kit at HDNW's offices in Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties.

"The annual program began in 2020 and, last year, the health department provided 66 radon test kits to the community during National Radon Action Month," said Jeremy Fruk, HDNW Environmental Health Director. "In addition to helping residents test for radon in their homes—something that should be done every two years—we donated the food we collected to an area pantry to help those in need."

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas. You cannot see, smell or taste radon gas and there are no short-term effects that warn you of exposure.

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, behind smoking, resulting in an estimated 21,000 deaths annually, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Radon exposure is highly preventable and can be mitigated at a relatively low cost to homeowners.

To help residents learn more about radon levels in their county, Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) has created a [one-stop website](#). The site has a search-by-county function where residents can learn about local radon levels, access contact information for the local health department and state radon officer, and link through to more educational resources.

### **Measuring Levels**

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter, with a symbol of pCi/l. One pCi/l means that in 1 liter of air, there will be 2.2 radioactive breakdowns each minute. The average national indoor radon level is 1.3 pCi/L.

HDNW's jurisdiction's averages are:

- Antrim: 1.5 pCi/L
- Charlevoix: 1.9 pCi/L
- Emmet: 2.1 pCi/L
- Otsego: 4.0 pCi/L

*The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit [nwhealth.org](http://nwhealth.org).*

The EPA has established 4 pCi/L as the level where mitigation is recommended.

Testing every two years is recommended as buildings settle and slight cracks in the foundation can result in changing radon levels. Tests should be done in the lowest level of the home or building. Elevated radon levels can be reduced by installing radon reduction systems to help reduce radon to acceptable levels.

Radon test kits can be traded for a nonperishable food item at HDNW offices Monday-Friday between 8 a.m.-12 p.m. and 1-5 p.m. until January 31, 2023. For more information about radon test kits, please call 800-432-4121.

For additional information about radon, visit the [Environmental Protection Agency's site](#). For an instructional video on how to use a test kit, click [here](#).

###

## Have you tested your home for radon in the past two years?

### THE PROBLEM

- Radon gas has no smell, taste, or color.
- The CDC states that it is the leading cause of death in the home.
- The only way to know if you have a radon problem is to test for it.

### THE SOLUTION

- Radon testing is easy and inexpensive.
- If high levels of radon are found they can easily be reduced.

**Talk to your doctor about how to protect you and your family.**

Questions? Contact the Michigan Indoor Radon Program at 800-RADONGAS (800-723-6642)

**EGLE** MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

website: [Michigan.gov/radon](http://Michigan.gov/radon) | email: [Radon@michigan.gov](mailto:Radon@michigan.gov)

08/2019