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## **Health Department encourages radon testing**

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) is encouraging residents to test their homes for radon and is offering free test kits to those living in Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm counties.

“Radon is a naturally occurring gas in the environment that becomes dangerous when it builds up indoors,” said Liz Braddock, MMDHDs Environmental Health Division Director. “Radon can rise to dangerous levels in homes, especially in the winter when windows remain closed.”

Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, after smoking. Radon-related lung cancers are responsible for an estimated 21,000 deaths annually in the United States, according to the National Academy of Sciences.

Radon forms when small amounts of radium and uranium in the ground start to break down. Most soils in our area contain some amount of these elements, so radon can be found anywhere. The gas becomes dangerous when it gets trapped indoors and builds to high levels. Radon enters homes through cracks in walls, basement floors, foundations and other openings. Any home, new or old, could have a radon problem.

You can't see or smell radon, and it causes no immediate symptoms, so testing is the only way to know if there is radon in your home. Residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm counties can obtain a free test kit by contacting the Mid-Michigan District Health Department:

Clinton County Branch Office: 1307 E. Townsend Road, St. Johns. Phone: 989-227-3110.

Gratiot County Branch Office: 151 Commerce Drive, Ithaca. Phone: 989-875-1002.

Montcalm County Branch Office: 615 N. State Street, Stanton. Phone: 989-831-3607.

The free test kits are available from the health department through collaboration with the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.*

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