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Test your home for radon

By Alison Layman Center for ReSource Conservation
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Q. Should I be concerned about the air quality in my home?

A. Even if there are no smokers in your home and you properly store cleaning solutions and other hazardous materials, there is still a risk. The reason is that radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that in large quantities and exposure can lead to lung cancer. Because it travels up from the ground, a home with our without a basement can have radon.

There are tests available to determine the level of radon. Tests are only accurate when performed in a closed home and away from drafts and chemicals. For this reason, it is most effective to test in fall and winter months when windows are closed.

A short term test consists of a simple charcoal device that absorbs the air. The test must be sent to a lab for processing. The Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) sells short term test kits. For \$16.25 the test kit includes all postage and processing. Test kits are also available at local hardware stores.

You can test for radon using either a short term or long term test. McGuckin Hardware has a 45 day test and long term tests that last more 90 days. Long term tests are used to catch seasonal changes in radon levels.

If radon levels are high there are a number of treatment methods. A vent pipe installation can pull radon away from the house and release it. Other methods, such as sealing foundation cracks, are short-term solutions. Treatment information is available on EPA and Boulder County Public Health websites. Radon specialists can also install a permanent radon mitigation system in a home.

For information on purchasing a test from Center for ReSource Conservation visit: <http://conservationcenter.org/about-the-center-for-resource->

CRC is a non-profit organization that helps the community conserve resources, save money and improve the quality of life. Visit conservationcenter.org. Call 303-999-3820

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