



Ford County Public Health Department

235 North Taft Street

Paxton, IL 60957

January 9, 2018

For Immediate Release

Contact: Brandi Williams, Office Manager
(217)379-9281

bwilliams@fordcountyphd.org

GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF HEALTH

Your body will thank you.

The Ford County Public Health Department (FCPHD) wants to remind everyone that you have the ability to give yourself the gift of a healthier life. Three ways you can accomplish this is to know the levels of Radon in your home by testing it for Radon, if you use tobacco products find help to stop using those products, and avoid exposure to secondhand smoke. Tobacco is the leading cause of lung cancer and Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that tobacco smoke contains a deadly mix of more than 7,000 chemicals; hundreds of these chemicals are toxic and about 70 can cause cancer.

Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that occurs naturally from the breakdown of uranium. Rocks and soil can contain uranium. Radon gas can enter through cracks in homes/buildings/schools and expose people to the radiation. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) estimates that 21,000 yearly lung cancer U.S. deaths are associated with radon.

If you smoke or are exposed to second-hand smoke, you have an increased risk of lung cancer. If you are exposed to high Radon levels, you have an increased risk of lung cancer. Statistically, the combination of being exposed to high Radon levels and tobacco smoke significantly increases your risk of contracting lung cancer.

- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome, ear infections, colds, pneumonia, bronchitis, and more severe asthma. Being exposed to secondhand smoke slows the growth of children's lungs and can cause them to cough, wheeze, and feel breathless.
- The U.S. Surgeon General estimates that living with a smoker increases a nonsmoker's chances of developing lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent.
- Exposure to high Radon levels increases your risk of developing lung cancer to 1 in 20.
- The combination of exposure to high Radon levels and tobacco smoke increases your risk of developing lung cancer to 1 in 3.

The only way your family can know whether your home has an elevated level of radon is to test for it. Ford County Public Health Department is offering **FREE Radon Test Kits** and a chance to **win a FREE Fitbit**. Each completed Radon Test received through our office (1 completed test per Ford County household) between now and March 2, 2018, will be entered into a drawing for a free Fitbit. To obtain your free Radon test kit, please come to the Ford County Public Health Department between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm Monday through Friday.

For more information, call the Ford County Public Health Department at 217-379-9281.

To learn more about radon in Illinois you can visit:

- IEMA radon website at www.radon.illinois.gov/

To learn more about the effects of tobacco you can visit:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/>
- American Lung Association at <http://www.lung.org/>
- Illinois Tobacco Quitline at <http://quityes.org/>

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