



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY
Health Department

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Lead Education and Abatement Program

Radon Gas Can Become an Unwelcome Guest

Radon is a colorless and odorless radioactive gas that forms when uranium that naturally occurs in the soil breaks down and gets into the air you breathe.

The average indoor radon level in Lewis and Clark County is 13 pCi/L, according to the Montana State Radon Office. That's more than three times the level considered acceptable by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Radon can sneak into your home through cracks and holes in the basement or foundation. It can become trapped indoors and build to dangerously high levels.

Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. The EPA estimates that about 20,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the U.S. are radon-related. Smokers are at the highest risk because of the synergistic effects of radon and smoking combined.

Fortunately, there are fairly simple mitigation practices you can follow to reduce radon buildup in your home. You can start by using a cheap radon test kit available at most hardware stores.

If it indicates that your indoor radon levels are 4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter) or higher, the EPA recommends that you hire a certified radon specialist to fix it. Because there is no known safe level of exposure to radon, EPA also recommends that you consider fixing your home if radon levels are between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L.

You can find certified radon specialists in the Yellow Pages or by searching online. You can also find a list of professionals, as well as lots of other state-specific radon information, on the Montana State Radon Office website at <http://mt.radon-info>. More information about radon is also available on the EPA website, www.epa.gov/radon.

Call Jan or Debb at the East Helena Lead Education and Abatement Program with any questions or concerns at 457-8583 or visit them in Room 201 of East Helena City Hall

The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department's mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.