

SUSSEX RESIDENTS REMINDED OF RADON CONCERNS

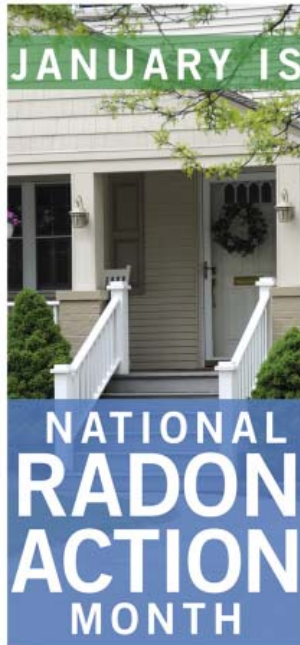
Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that is a decay product of uranium and is found in soil all over the world. Sussex County has particularly high levels of radon because of its location on the Reading Prong, a uranium-rich natural geological formation that stretches from Pennsylvania through northwestern New Jersey and into southern New York State.

While radon levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low risk, the gas can be harmful when it accumulates indoors, in places such as homes or other buildings. When rising up from the soil, through cracks and openings such as sump pump lids and plumbing features on the lower levels of your home, elevated radon levels can become a health concern.

However, its presence can only be detected by testing specifically for radon because the gas is invisible and has no odor. **All homeowners are encouraged to test their homes for radon because long term exposure to the gas has been linked to lung cancer.**

Lung Cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States for both men and women. In both Sussex and Warren

Counties, lung and bronchus cancers account for 12.6% of all cancer cases and 26.8% of all cancer deaths. **Many people are unaware that radon exposure is also a primary cause of lung cancer deaths in New Jersey.** According to the Department of Environmental Protection, radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and is responsible for about 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year.



www.epa.gov/radon/nram

Although the survival rate of lung cancer is low, it can be treated. Many cases of lung cancer can actually be prevented, especially in the case of radon.

So, the first step: determine what, if any, is the actual level of radon in your home. A house built on uranium rich soil does not automatically mean elevated radon levels. The fact is that the longer a person is exposed, the greater the risk, so all people are encouraged to test their homes for radon.

The following guideline should be used by both homeowners and measurement companies. **For both long-term and short-term tests, the testing device must be placed:**

- In the lowest livable level of the home which is used, or could be used, as a living space. This would include, first floor without a basement, in a finished or unfinished basement, but not a crawlspace. (Continued, next page)



Lend Us Your Ear... & Help Protect Your Lungs

WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW

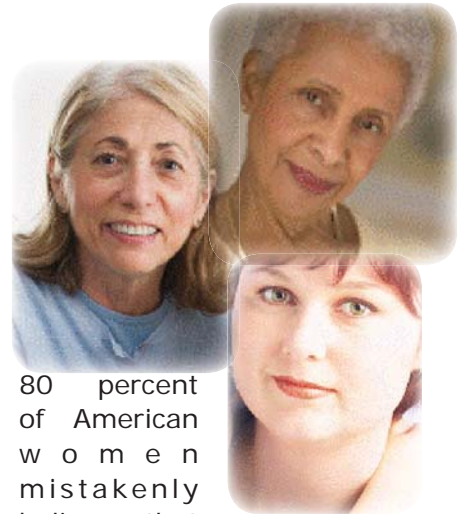
In spite of decades of evidence of the harmful effects of tobacco use, women – and young girls -- still continue to be convinced by tobacco companies that smoking offers independence, sophistication, power, freedom, style and even weight loss. So convinced, in fact, that more than 21 million adult women and 1.8 million girls currently smoke cigarettes. And so convinced, that it has resulted in an increase of more than 600 percent in lung cancer

For more than 10 years, women in Sussex County have consistently had higher rates of lung cancer than the state average.

Further, in 2008, the American Cancer Society estimated that nationally, there would be about 100,000 cases of lung cancer in women, resulting in approximately 71,000 deaths. That is more than the number of women who will die from breast, ovarian, and uterine cancers combined.

Surprised? You're not alone. A survey from the American Legacy Foundation found that

death rates in women between 1950 and 2003, primarily due to smoking.



80 percent of American women mistakenly believe that breast cancer is the primary cause of cancer death among women.

Men seem to have gotten the message, as the rate of incidence of the disease has been declining since the early 1980s. The incidence rate for women has continued to increase until just recently.

(Continued, next page)

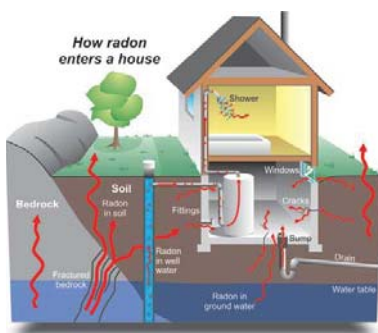
Source: American Lung Association, American Cancer Society, NJ Cancer Registry

Sussex Residents reminded of Radon Concern *(Continued from page 1)*

- In a location where it will not be disturbed.
- At least 20 inches from the floor, at least 4 inches away from other objects, and at least 36 inches away from doors, windows, or other openings to the outside. The test only needs to be placed 1 foot away from exterior walls that have no openings. If suspended from the ceiling, it should be in the general breathing zone.

Test kits should not be placed:

- In areas exposed to direct sunlight, drafts, high heat, or high humidity; or
- In kitchens bathrooms, laundry rooms, or closets.



All test kit instructions should be carefully followed. For more information on the "do's and don'ts" of radon testing, visit the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Radon Section website at www.njradon.org, or contact them at 800-648-0394.

Sussex County residents are eligible to receive free radon testing kits through a joint effort by the Department of Environmental and Public Health Services and the NJDEP Radon Section's, "Radon Awareness Program (RAP)" to promote testing for radon in homes. To receive your free radon testing kit, contact Jim McDonald at the Department of Environmental and Public Health Services, 973-579-0370, or for additional information visit, www.sussex.nj.us/health.

WHAT WOMEN NEED TO KNOW

(Continued from page 2)

You may also be surprised to learn that non-smokers make up about 10 – 20 % of lung cancer cases. Among that group, women are two to three times more likely than men to get the disease. While some of these cases are the result of second-hand smoke, studies have also shown that cumulative radon exposure in the home is also a significant risk factor for lung cancer in women, as well as occupational exposures. There remain, however, cases for which there is no such apparent cause.

So what' does this mean to me?

- If you are a woman who is still smoking, its time to quit. The health benefits of stopping now (and some are immediate) are significant, and can literally save your life.
- Maintain a healthy diet of fruits and vegetables, which may help prevent lung cancer.
- If you live with a smoker, do all you can to help that person quit – for your benefit as well as theirs.
- Check your home for radon. Risks for lung cancer associated with radon are compounded by smoking (see related article, page 1).
- Avoiding exposure to known cancer-causing chemicals, in the workplace and elsewhere, and always use proper protective equipment

If you think you may be at risk, speak to you healthcare provider today.

TRY, TRY AGAIN.

OK, so most of us know that use of tobacco products is harmful to almost all parts of our bodies. It acts directly on the heart to change heart rate and blood pressure. It also acts on the nerves that control respiration to change breathing patterns. In fact, in high concentrations, nicotine is deadly, and one drop of purified nicotine on the tongue will kill a person. It's so lethal that it has been used as a pesticide for centuries.

But what you may not realize is that when tobacco is smoked, nicotine is absorbed by the lungs and quickly moved into the bloodstream, where it is circulated throughout the brain. In fact, nicotine reaches the brain within

8 seconds after someone inhales tobacco smoke. It can also enter the bloodstream through the mucous membranes that line the mouth (if tobacco is chewed) or nose (if snuff is used), and even through the skin.

So why exactly do people smoke? Because nicotine acts in the brain where it stimulates feelings of pleasure.

Scientists have discovered that nicotine raises the levels of a neurotransmitter called dopamine in the parts of the brain that produce feelings of pleasure and reward. Dopamine, which is sometimes called the 'pleasure molecule', is the same neurotransmitter that is involved in addictions to other drugs such as cocaine and heroin.

Researchers now believe that this change in dopamine may play a key role in all addictions. This may help explain why it is so hard for people to stop smoking. Hard--but not impossible. *(Continued, next page)*

DID YOU KNOW:

More than 4,000 chemicals have been identified in secondhand tobacco smoke? At least 250 are known to be harmful, and 50 of these are known to cause cancer.



For Support Call:

(Continued from page 3)

No one can deny that quitting smoking is difficult, **but you can do it**. To have the best chance of success in quitting, you need to know what you're up against, what your options are, and where to go for help.

Stopping Smoking with Help From Your Healthcare Provider - A route which may be particularly helpful for those who have tried to quit several times before is Nicotine Replacement Therapy. This may be provided as a gum, skin patch, nasal spray, or inhaler, and can assist in reducing the effects of nicotine withdrawal. Note that a prescription is needed.

Stopping Smoking On Your Own - Once you've decided to quit, plan your strategy. Will you gradually cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke each day, or will you go cold turkey, and stop smoking all at once? Here are a few tips to get you started:

- *Set a firm quit date* - but make sure its no more than four weeks from the time you begin cutting down.
- *Smoke fewer cigarettes each day* - when you reach half the number you usually smoke, stop altogether.
- *On the day you quit, (and beyond)*- get rid of all your cigarettes and put away the ashtrays; Change your morning routine, and plan to stay busy; Carry other things to keep in your mouth, including hard candy, healthy snacks, and even a toothpick; Let others know you have quit -- ask for support and accept it when offered; Consider using online or 'live' stop smoking support groups - most are free. *Most importantly, if you slip and smoke, don't be discouraged -- many former smokers have tried several times before finally succeeding.*

Support resources are abundant. Just look to the right to get started!

In Sussex County:

Shelley Stuart, CHES
Community Partnership for
Tobacco Free New Jersey
973-383-4787 ext. 237
shelley@centerforprevention.org

New Jersey QuitLine
1-866-NJ-STOPS

NJ QuitNet for online support
www.nj.quitnet.com

NJ Comprehensive
Tobacco Control Program
[http://www.state.nj.us/health/
as/ctcp/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/health/as/ctcp/index.html)

American Cancer
Society
1-800-ACS-2345
www.cancer.org

American Lung
Association
1-800-LUNG-USA
(www.lungusa.org)

www.smokefree.gov

WHO WE ARE

The Sussex County Cancer Coalition is a diverse partnership of community members and resource agencies developed to encourage Sussex County residents to adopt cancer-preventive behaviors while reducing the incidence of morbidity/mortality through early illness detection. The Coalition focuses on public education with a positive tone, increasing awareness that healthier lifestyle choices combined with appropriate and timely medical screening can reduce the burden of cancer illness in Sussex County. Learn more about the Cancer Coalition and our partners at <http://www.sussexagainstcancer.org> or by calling 973-579-0570 x 1212.



The Sussex County Cancer Coalition is made possible by a grant to the Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services and from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' Office of Cancer Control and Prevention. The mission of the Sussex County Cancer Coalition is to implement the New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan in Sussex County. For more information on Comprehensive Cancer Control in New Jersey, please visit: www.njcancer.gov.