**Morgan County**

**Family & Consumer**

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**January 2023**

**Notes from Nellie,**

***Happy, Happy New Year*** to all! Hard to believe we are opening the book on another year of adventure and learning. We are happy to have new administrative assistant Angie Ferguson on board since early December 2022. Take time to welcome her to our staff. Stop in and introduce yourself, she will be happy to put a face with a name.

Review all the material in this mailing. You will find cooking through the calendar dates for January, February and March 2023, leader training for lessons for extension homemakers, a community forum “Our Community, Our Solution: addressing addiction” meeting coming up.

Looking forward to all our new opportunities to learn together in 2023!

Fondly,

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Nellie A. Buchanan, Morgan County Extension Agent

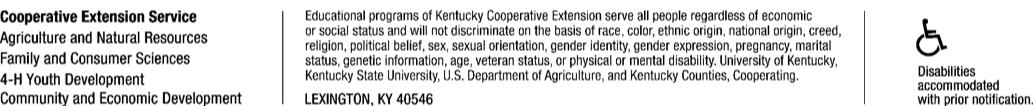
for Family & Consumer Sciences Education

***Focus ~~ Promoting Healthy Homes and Communities***

**January is Radon Action Month**

Gov. Andy Beshear has named January as Radon Action Month in Kentucky.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that we can’t see, taste, or smell. Radon exposure is harmful to our health. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer. People who are exposed to both radon and tobacco smoke are 10 times more likely to develop lung cancer. ***Kentucky leads the nation in the number of new lung cancer cases and lung cancer deaths.***

 Radon comes from the breakdown of uranium in the soil, in rock, and water. Every region in the country has radon, but levels vary widely by geographic area.

The Environmental Protection Agency lists radon is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers. The gas causes about 21,000 deaths from lung cancer every year.

**How to stay safe from radon**

**Test Your Home** – The EPA and the U.S. surgeon general recommend you test your home for radon. Testing is easy and inexpensive. Learn more about testing your home, including how to get an easy-to-use test kit at [**www.epa.gov/radon/find-radon-test-kit-or-measurement-and-mitigation-professional**](https://c/Users/bfitzpat/SchoolofHES%20Dropbox/Brian%20Fitzpatrick/Information%20Releases/2023%20Seasonal%20Q1/Ready%20to%20post/Promoting%20healthy%20homes%20and%20communities/www.epa.gov/radon/find-radon-test-kit-or-measurement-and-mitigation-professional). There is no known safe level of radon, and you should always aim to have the lowest level. The EPA recommends fixing your home if radon levels are above 4 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L).

1. **Spread the Word** - Use National Radon Action Month to encourage others to learn about radon and to test their homes, schools, and workspaces. Tell your family and friends about the health risk of radon. Other possibilities are:
   1. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about radon.
   2. Use social media to spread the word about radon and its dangers.
   3. Work with others in your community (local officials, health departments, schools, builders, etc.) to raise radon awareness.
2. **Mitigate (Fix) Your Home** – Lowering high radon levels requires technical knowledge and special skills. To find a qualified contractor in your area, contact the Kentucky Radon Program at 502-564-4856 ext. 4196 or visit [**https://certifiedradonpros.org/ky.html**](https://certifiedradonpros.org/ky.html).

***Radon is a preventable cause of death in Kentucky, and these steps can make your home and indoor environment easier to breathe in.***

**Resources:** [**https://kentuckyradon.org/2021/01/29/governor-beshear-proclaims-january-as-radon-action-month-in-kentucky/**](https://kentuckyradon.org/2021/01/29/governor-beshear-proclaims-january-as-radon-action-month-in-kentucky/)**;** [**https://www.uky.edu/KGS/radon/**](https://www.uky.edu/KGS/radon/)**;** [**https://www.epa.gov/radon/health-risk-radon**](https://www.epa.gov/radon/health-risk-radon)**;** [**https://www.epa.gov/radon/find-radon-test-kit-or-measurement-and-mitigation-professional**](https://www.epa.gov/radon/find-radon-test-kit-or-measurement-and-mitigation-professional)**;** [**https://www.cdc.gov/radon/radon-facts.html**](https://www.cdc.gov/radon/radon-facts.html)**;** [**https://www.cdc.gov/radon/radon-action.html**](https://www.cdc.gov/radon/radon-action.html)**;** [**http://www.radonleaders.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/NRAP-2021-2025-Action-Plan-508.pdf**](http://www.radonleaders.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/NRAP-2021-2025-Action-Plan-508.pdf)

**Source:** Hardin Stevens, Senior Extension Associate, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, March 2022

# Testing Your Home for Radon

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that you can’t see, taste, or smell. Exposure to this gas is harmful to your health. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer and the leading cause of lung cancer among people who don’t smoke.

There are several options to test for radon. You can find test kits at home improvement stores or online. Use an EPA-approved test kit for accuracy. The kits usually have a label that says “Meets EPA Requirements.”

The Kentucky Department for Public Health’s Radon Program recommends three testing methods:

a. You can use a short-term kit which is for tests lasting two to 90 days. Most commonly, people test for two days to one week, but it is important to understand that radon levels do change throughout the year.

b. The EPA recommends you test your home for one full calendar year when possible. Long-term kits range from 90 days up to a year. You can find long-term radon kits online and at home improvement stores. These tests will record the average radon level during the period you choose to test and give a better indication of year-round radon exposure in the home than a short-term test.

c. You can hire a certified testing and mitigation specialist to test your home or building. If you want to hire a professional, find someone who has the technical knowledge and special skills to test then install a radon mitigation system, if necessary. One point to consider is if you want a professional radon test completed before having a radon mitigation system installed, you may want to consider having a separate radon professional conduct the testing so there isn’t a conflict of interest for the installer.

When you test your home, it is important to find the right testing location.

1. Test the lowest level of the home that you use on a regular basis and where you or a household member spend at least 8 hours per week.

2. Place the test kit in a general breathing zone, between 2 and 7 feet above the floor.

3. Place the test kit at least 6 inches from any walls and 5 feet from exterior windows and doors.

4. Keep the test kit away from vents or other places where there is frequently moving air.

5. Do not place the test kit in direct sunlight or near areas of high moisture.

6. Keep out of reach of pets and children.

7. Do not move the test kit during testing.

Removing Radon from Your Home

If your home has tested high for radon (4 pCi/L or higher), experts recommend you have a professional install a radon mitigation system. The mitigation system reduces radon inside your home by either preventing radon from entering or by venting it outside after it has entered. Lowering high radon levels requires technical knowledge and special skills. Contractors who do not specialize in radon reduction could make the problem worse. There are several ways to find a certified contractor.  
  
a. Search the National Radon Proficiency Program website and enter your zip code at [**https://nrpp.info/pro-search/**](https://nrpp.info/pro-search/)

b. Contact the Kentucky Radon Program at [**https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/emb/Pages/radon.aspx**](https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/emb/Pages/radon.aspx)

c. Check out the Kentucky Association of Radon Professionals website at [**https://kentuckyradon.org/**](https://kentuckyradon.org/)

There are several proven methods to reduce radon in your home. The most-used method has a vent pipe system and fan, which pulls radon from beneath the house and vents it to the outside. This system does not require major changes to your home. Sealing foundation cracks and other openings makes this kind of system more effective and cost-efficient. Similar systems can also be installed in houses with crawl spaces. The right system depends on the design of your home and other factors such as whether your home has a basement.

After installing a radon mitigation system, test your home again to make sure the system is working. It is strongly advised to retest your home every two years to be sure radon levels still are low. You should also retest your home after any home remodeling projects.   
  
***Radon is a preventable cause of death in Kentucky, and these steps can make your home and indoor environment easier to breathe in.***

**References:**  
[**https://nrpp.info/pro-search/**](https://nrpp.info/pro-search/)**;** [**https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/emb/Pages/radon.aspx**](https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dphps/emb/Pages/radon.aspx)

[**https://kentuckyradon.org/**](https://kentuckyradon.org/)**;** [**https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-12/documents/2016\_consumers\_guide\_to\_radon\_reduction.pdf**](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-12/documents/2016_consumers_guide_to_radon_reduction.pdf)  
  
**Source:** Hardin Stevens, Senior Extension associate, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, October 2022

***Focus on Health and Wellness***

**January is Thyroid Awareness Month**

The thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped gland at the base of the neck just below the Adam’s apple. It sends out important hormones that affect organs such as our heart, brain, liver, kidneys, and skin. Although the thyroid is small, it plays a big role in keeping our body healthy and our organs functioning properly.

The thyroid is vital for the growth, development, and regulation of the body. Several different disorders can arise when our thyroid makes too much hormone (hyperthyroidism) or too little (hypothyroidism).

Undiagnosed thyroid disease may put us at risk for other serious conditions, such as heart disease, infertility, and osteoporosis.

Common symptoms of thyroid disease include:

* Fatigue or trouble sleeping
* Unexplained changes in weight
* Changes in memory or ability to concentrate
* Depression, anxiety, or feelings of irritability
* Fast or irregular heartbeat
* Joint or muscle pain or weakness

You may be more at-risk to develop a thyroid disease if you have type 1 diabetes, have had past radiation treatment to the head or neck area, a family history of thyroid disease, or a recent pregnancy.

More than 30 million Americans will develop some form of thyroid condition in their lifetime.  If you suspect you are at risk for thyroid disease, make an appointment with your health-care provider to discuss your concerns.

**Reference:** [**http://www.thyroidawareness.com/educational-resources**](http://www.thyroidawareness.com/educational-resources); **Source:** Katherine Jury, Extension Specialist for Family Health

# *Focus on Nurturing Families*

# Work-Life Balance as a Parent

According to Dr. David A. Weisenhorn, Ph.D., Senior Extension Specialist for Parenting and Child Development Education, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment: “The term “work-life balance” seems simple, except for people like me who have a hard time figuring out the “balance” part. I find balance by taking time to prepare for the week. I divide my time over the multiple tasks that I need to do in hopes of better managing the stress of work and life. Here are six tips on how to make the most of your busy lives.”

**Reduce morning rush:** Reduce morning anxiety by preparing the night before (i.e., laying out clothes, making meals, gathering work materials).

**Organize your week:** Use one day each week to plan the rest of the week (meals, chores, groceries, kids’ sports, date nights, family time, homework time, etc.).

**Talk to your boss:** If spending more time with your family is what you want, your employer may have benefits you have not explored.

**Stay connected:** With today’s technology, even if you travel, you can still see and talk to each other.

**Don’t waste time:** Use your time wisely. Limit screen time to once a week.

**Schedule time with your partner:** Date night, cook night, evening walk or exercise, conversations about kids, just do something together that brings you closer.

**Big Blue Book Club Announces the First Book of 2023**

Join Family and Consumer Sciences Extension for our next Big Blue Book Club series featuring, *Is Butter a Carb? Unpicking Fact from Fiction in the World of Nutrition.*This book removes the moral stigma from food and breaks down the science to provide easy, accessible evidence-based advice on how to live your healthiest and happiest life. This practical book is the modern must-have nutrition book for everybody interested in food, health, and pop science.

Led by Dr. Heather Norman-Burgdolf, Extension Specialist for Food and Nutrition, this series will be held on Thursdays March 2, 9, 16, and 23 at 10:00 am ET/9:00 am CT.

Please click the link to register: <https://ukfcs.net/BBBC23Book1> or use the QR code below

Building strong families. Building Kentucky. It starts with us. #UKFCSExt #BigBlueBookClub

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