

Lung Cancer from Your Home? Radon Gas in Your Home Could Lead to Lung Cancer

Radon is an invisible, odorless and tasteless harmful radioactive gas.

Radon develops from the natural decay of uranium in the soil, rock and water and then gets into the air you breathe, potentially increasing your risk of lung cancer. When you breathe air containing radon, the radon particles get trapped in your lungs, then spread and cause tissue damage which may develop into lung cancer. As a matter of fact, radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today. Making matters worse, if you're a smoker and your home has high levels of radon, your risk of developing lung cancer is especially high.

So how does radon gas get into your home? As radon is released from the breakdown of uranium in nearly all types of soils, the gas typically rises from the ground up, into the air, and into your home through cracks and other holes in your home's foundation. Your home then traps radon inside where it can build up. Any home may have a radon problem - new or old, well-sealed or drafty, and homes with or without basements.

The good news is that it is relatively easy to find out if your home has a radon problem. So easy, in fact, that you can do it yourself and it should only take a few minutes of your time.

There are many kinds of low-cost "do-it-yourself" radon test kits you can get through the mail and in hardware stores or other retail locations. There are basically two types of kits: a short term test kit and a long term test kit. Each kit is placed in your home for a specified period of time after which it must be shipped to a testing lab for the results. Regardless of which kit you choose, it is important to follow the directions carefully so you obtain accurate results. You will also want to make note of

area. For links and information, visit www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html.

If your home is found to have a radon problem, there are several methods available to lower radon levels in your home. For more information on the radon reduction method that best suits your house type, visit www.epa.gov/radon or call the NJ Department of Environmental Protection Radon Program at 1-800-648-0394.



where you are shipping the test kit afterwards just in case you don't receive your test results. If you prefer, you can hire a qualified tester to test your home. You should first contact your state radon office about obtaining a list of qualified testers. You can also contact a private radon proficiency program for lists of privately certified radon professionals serving your

Radon is associated with 15,000 to 22,000 lung cancer deaths a year; don't wait, test your home, and have any radon hazards properly eliminated.

Inside this issue:

Radon	1
HPV/Gardasil	2
Cancer Prevention Month/Colorectal Cancer	2-4
National Wear Red Day	4
Food Allergies	4
Passaic County Cancer Coalition	4
Health Screenings & Programs	5

Special points of interest:

- January is Radon Awareness Month
- January is Cervical Health Awareness Month
- February is National Cancer Prevention Month
- February 6th is National Wear Red Day
- March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
- March 31st is Kick Butts Day

What is Genital HPV (Human Papillomavirus)

Genital human papillomavirus is the most common sexually transmitted infection. There are about 40 types of HPV that can infect the genital areas of men and women which include the skin of the penis, vulva (area outside the vagina), anus, linings of the vagina, cervix, and rectum. Genital HPV is passed on through genital contact, most often during vaginal and anal sex. Approximately 20 million Americans are currently infected with HPV, and 6.2 million people become newly infected each year. Fifty percent (50%) of sexually active men and women acquire genital HPV infection at some point in their lives. You can't see HPV and most people who have become infected don't even know they have it.

Signs and Symptoms of HPV

Most HPV infections go undetected because they don't cause signs or symptoms. Even if you don't exhibit signs and symptoms of the infection, they may emerge later and you may have already transmitted the virus to someone else.

The signs and symptoms that may appear vary according to the type of HPV infection you may have. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Genital Warts
- Genital Lesions
- Oral Lesions
- Common, Plantar and Flat Warts

Risk Factors

- Multiple sexual partners
- Starting sexual activity at a young age
- A vulnerable immune system

Prevention

- Abstaining from all sexual activity
- Being in a mutually monogamous relationship
- Reducing the number of sex partners
- Regular cervical cancer screenings (Pap-test)
- Using latex condoms (prevents some, not all, HPV)
- Get vaccinated with the Gardasil vaccine (girls and young women ages 9-26)

How can the Gardasil vaccine help?

Gardasil is a vaccine (injection/shot) that helps protect against 4 types of HPV: 2 types that cause 70% of cervical cancer cases and 2 more types that cause 90% of genital warts cases. Gardasil prevents infection caused by Human papillomavirus types 6, 11, 16, and 18. It works by causing your body to produce its own protection (antibodies) against the virus. Gardasil is recommended for girls and young women ages 9-26.

The Gardasil shot is usually given in the arm muscle. 3 doses are recommended to be given at different schedules.

Schedule:

Dose 1: a date you and your health provider choose

Dose 2: 2 months after dose 1

Dose 3: 6 months after dose 1

Side Effects:

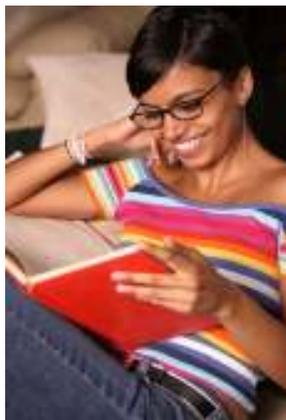
Common side effects include pain in the area of injection, swelling, redness at injection site, headache, fever, nausea, dizziness, itching, bruising, and fainting.

Other side effects may include: vomiting, cough, toothache, general ill feeling, joint pain, trouble sleeping, and stuffy nose.

There are several side effects of [Gardasil](#) that you should report immediately to your healthcare provider. These include, but are not limited to: very high fever, signs of an allergic reaction, including difficulty breathing, wheezing, an unusual skin rash, itching, or hives.

What should I know?

- Continue to get routine cervical cancer screenings
- Gardasil doesn't fully protect everyone who gets the vaccine
- Will not protect against HPV you already have



February is National Cancer Prevention Month

Cancer is a group of diseases in which cells in a part of the body begin to grow out of control. Often-times these cells spread to other parts of the body. Approximately 1 out of every 2 American men and 1 out of every 3 American women will have some type of cancer at some point during their lifetime.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States. The World Health Organization predicts that within the next few years, cancer may become the leading cause of death in the United States - a rank held by heart disease since 1910.

In most cases, cancer is a preventable disease. All cancers caused by cigarette smoking and heavy use of alcohol could be prevented. Cancer deaths related to being overweight, obese, physically inactive, and having poor nutrition can also be prevented. Certain cancers related to infectious agents such as the human papilloma virus (HPV), could be prevented through behavioral modifications or a vaccine. Skin cancers can be prevented by protecting the skin from the sun's rays and avoiding indoor tanning.

In Passaic County, four cancers represent over 50% of all new cancer cases. These cancers include: lung, prostate, breast, and colorectal cancers; all have the potential of being prevented. .

Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer and preventable death in the United States. With all the cessation resources available and the smoke-free laws in place across the country, there has never been a better time to quit smoking and enjoy the many health benefits of not smoking. People who quit smoking, regardless of age, live longer than people who continue to smoke. Not only will quitting lower your chances of developing lung cancer, but it will substantially decrease your risk of laryngeal, esophageal, oral, pancreatic, bladder, and cervical cancers.

Other than some types of skin cancers, prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer among American men. The American Cancer Society estimates that 1 in 6 men will be diagnosed with prostate

cancer in their lifetime and 1 out of 35 will die from it. This makes prostate cancer the second leading cause of death among American men, second only to lung cancer. Because the exact cause of prostate cancer is not fully understood, it is difficult to determine how best to prevent this disease. Many risk factors such as age, race, and family history cannot be controlled; however, studies have shown that a healthy weight and diet may help prevent some cases of this disease.

The American Cancer Society estimates that over 180,000 women will have been diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008. Regular screenings, breast self exams beginning in your 20's, and mammograms in your 40's, increase the likelihood of finding cancerous breast tissue early when it is easier to treat. Treating cancer earlier reduces the risk of developing or dying from breast cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer for both men and women. There are almost 150,000 new cases of colorectal cancer in the United States every year. Fortunately, thanks to screening and improved treatment, the number of deaths attributed to colorectal cancer has decreased over the last 15 years. Nevertheless, measures should be taken to prevent the development of this disease. For more on this topic, read the colorectal cancer article on this page.

In most cases, cancer is a preventable disease. The lifestyle choices we make affect our chances of developing cancer. Maintaining a healthy weight, eating a variety of healthful foods especially those from plant sources (fruits, vegetables, and certain grains), limiting intake of red meats (especially high-fat or processed meats), and being physically active most days of the week for at least 30 minutes, may help prevent many types of cancer.

For some cancers, early detection is the best form of prevention. Screen early. Screen often.

For additional information, visit the Passaic County Cancer Coalition website at www.cityofpassaic.com/cancer.

Additional information can also be found on the American Cancer Society webpage at www.cancer.org.

The colon and rectum are parts of the digestive system. Together they form the large intestine; the colon is the first 4 to 5 feet and the rectum is the last several inches of the large intestine. Colorectal cancer refers to cancer that starts in either the colon or rectum.

As with most cancers, the exact cause of colorectal cancer is not fully understood. Why some people develop the disease and others do not is unknown. What we do know is that certain risk factors will increase the likelihood of developing colorectal cancer.

A risk factor is anything that increases your chance of developing a particular disease. However, it is important to keep in mind that having a risk factor, or several risk factors, does not necessarily mean you will develop a particular disease. Risk factors simply suggest that a potential exists for developing a disease.

Some risk factors you cannot change; others are associated with lifestyle choices we make. The following unchangeable risk factors are associated with the development of colorectal cancers:

Age The chances of developing colorectal cancer increases after age 50.

History of Colorectal Cancer If you have had colorectal cancer in the past, even if it was completely removed, you are more likely to have new cancers start in other parts of your colon and rectum. This is especially true if you were diagnosed with colon cancer before age 60. Also, if you have or have had a close family relative with colorectal cancer, then you are at an increased risk of developing the disease. People with a family history of colorectal cancer should talk with their doctors about when and how often to have screening tests.

Bowel Diseases and Family Syndromes Certain types of bowel diseases and family syndromes have been linked with an increased risk of colorectal cancer. Consult with your family doctor for more information.

Race For reasons not completely understood, some races and ethnic groups such as African Americans, Jews of Eastern European decent (Ashkenazi Jews) and Latinos have a higher colorectal cancer risk.

The following lifestyle related risk factors are associated with an increased risk of developing colorectal cancer:

Diet A diet high in red meats (beef, lamb, or

liver) and processed meats such as hot dogs, bologna, and lunch meat can increase your colorectal cancer risk. Diets high in vegetables and fruits have been linked with a lower risk of colorectal cancer.

Lack of Exercise Regular exercise may lower your risk of colorectal cancer. Most experts recommend that adults should aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity five days a week to produce substantial health benefits.

Being Overweight Being overweight increases a person's risk of dying from colorectal cancer as well as many other types of cancer.

Smoking Most people know that smoking causes lung cancer, but long-time smokers are more likely than non-smokers to die of colorectal cancer. Smoking increases the risk of many other cancers too.

Alcohol Heavy use of alcohol has been linked to colorectal cancer.

Diabetes People with type 2 diabetes have an increased chance of getting colorectal cancer. They also tend to have a higher death rate from this cancer.

Several types of screening tests are used to find colorectal cancer. These tests can find colorectal cancers or polyps, which are small growths found in the colon and rectum that may become cancerous. Detecting cancer early greatly improves the chances of successful treatment. Screening tests can be categorized into two groups:

Tests that can find both colorectal polyps and cancer: These tests are done either with a scope inserted into the rectum, or with special x-ray tests. Polyps found before they turn into cancer can be removed, so these tests may prevent colorectal cancer. Because of this, scoping and/or x-ray is preferred if available and you are willing. Such tests include the flexible sigmoidoscopy and the colonoscopy.

Tests that mainly find cancer: These involve testing the stool (feces) for signs of cancer. These tests are easier to have done, but they are less likely to find polyps.

(Continued on page 4)

Food Allergies

A food allergy is a condition where your body thinks that certain proteins in some foods are harmful and the immune system tries to fight against it. Just as our bodies fight off infections, people with food allergies have allergic reactions because their body is attempting to fight the protein in that particular food.

Common foods allergens include:

- Milk
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Wheat
- Eggs
- Peanuts and tree nuts (walnuts, cashews)

Symptoms of an allergic reaction:

- Rashes
- Tingling sensation in the mouth
- Shortness of breath
- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Anaphylaxis is a condition when your airways become constricted, making it hard to breathe; your blood pressure lowers severely and you may lose consciousness. If not treated, anaphylaxis can lead to death. There is no cure for food allergies. The best way to avoid an allergic reaction is to stay away from the foods that cause the allergy.

Common ways people get food allergy attacks are by eating foods cooked in oils made from nuts, such as peanuts and cashews. Recipes that include allergy causing foods (such as eggs used in cake icing, milk based products or wheat used in pastas and breads) commonly cause allergic reactions. Cross contact is another common way. Cross contact is when allergy causing foods come in contact with other food items, either by (1) not using different utensils to prepare each food item or (2) by not properly cleaning utensils and cutting boards between the preparation of different food items.

Prevention:

As a Consumer:

- learn to read ingredients

on food labels (ask about food names you're not familiar with)

- tell the server or chef about your food allergy
- ask about ingredients used to prepare foods
- be aware of hidden ingredients in sauces and dressings
- take along your allergy medications

As a Food Handler:

- take customer requests seriously
- check for allergens every time
- check recipes and food labels
- post signs that alert customers of potential allergens in your food
- stop cross contact
- label foods taken out of their original packages

If you are not sure of the ingredients in a certain food, be honest and tell the customer that you do not know.

(Colorectal, continued from pg 3)

When it comes to colorectal cancer, early detection is the best form of prevention. This is because regular screenings can find colorectal cancer in its earliest stages when it is easier to treat and cure. People with no identified risk factors should begin regular screenings at age 50. Those who have a family history or risk factors for colorectal polyps or cancer should talk with their doctor about starting their screenings at a younger age and getting screened more frequently.

Have you been screened lately?



National Wear Red Day - the first Friday of February every year - is a day when Americans nationwide will wear red to show their support for women's heart disease awareness.

When you think of heart disease, the first thing that might come to mind is that it is a man's health issue. However, heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women.

Many women underestimate the seriousness of their risk for developing heart disease. The truth is, according to 2004 data: 1 in 3 women has some form of cardiovascular disease; since 1984, the number of cardiovascular disease deaths for women exceeds those of men; women represent just over 50% of cardiovascular disease deaths; and, more women die from cardiovascular diseases combined than from all forms of cancer.

Join the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Women Heart; the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease; American Heart Association; and many other groups to promote National Wear Red Day in your local community.

This observance provides an opportunity for everyone to unite in this life-saving awareness movement by showing your support for women's health issues.

Let's paint the town red on Friday, February 6th!

The Passaic County Cancer Coalition

The City of Passaic Division of Health was awarded a County Cancer Coalition grant in July 2008 from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Office of Cancer Control and Prevention for the purpose of reinstating the Passaic County Cancer Coalition.



The Passaic County Cancer Coalition, and the other Cancer Coalitions throughout New Jersey, was formed as a result of the Governor's Task Force on Cancer Prevention established by Governor Christine Todd Whitman in 2001.

The Task Force conducted the first ever statewide capacity and needs assessment for cancer in each of New Jersey's 21 counties. The results of the statewide capacity and needs assessment established the status of the cancer burden in each county and an inventory of the state's cancer related activities and resources.

Ultimately, the Task Force's efforts resulted in the development of the New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan in 2003. The plan provides goals and objectives for comprehensive cancer prevention including education, screening, follow-up, and pallia-

The Passaic County Cancer Coalition *(Continued from page 4)*

tive care. Now in its second edition, the plan has served as a blueprint for the development of similar plans in other states and even Canada.

Comprised of local health departments, community organizations, local hospitals, cancer prevention programs, and other volunteers, the purpose of the Passaic County Cancer Coalition is to promote and implement the goals of the New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan in order to reduce the burden of cancer on all residents of Passaic County.

The Passaic County Cancer Coalition is committed to increasing cancer awareness and reducing the impact of cancer by educating, screening, and promoting access to treatment and follow-up to all Passaic County residents.

For more information about the Passaic County Cancer Coalition, to review the County's Cancer Fact Sheet or to review the New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan, please visit our web site at www.cityofpassaic.com/cancer.



Health Screenings and Programs

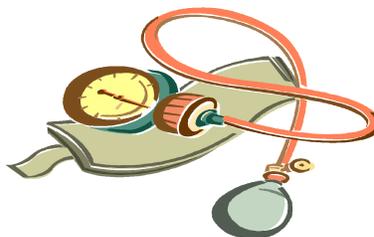
Blood Pressure Screening

Dates: *EVERY FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH*
Monday, February 2, 2009
Monday, March 2, 2009

Time: 10:00AM - 11:00AM

Place: Passaic Senior Center (Rear of City Hall)
330 Passaic St., Passaic, NJ

For more info: 973-365-5605



Lead Screening

*Children between
6 months - 6 years of age only*

Date: Every Wednesday

Time: 9:00AM - 11:30AM

Place: City of Passaic
Health Division Clinic
68-72 Third St., Passaic, NJ

For more info: 973-365-5681

Domestic Violence & Parenting Support Group

Date: Every Thursday of the Month

Time: 6:00PM - 8:00PM

Place: Passaic Senior Center
(Rear of City Hall)
330 Passaic St. Passaic, NJ

For more info, call Passaic Alliance:
973-365-5740

Confidential Rapid HIV Testing

Date: Every Wednesday of the Month

Time: 9:30AM - 12:00PM

Place: Passaic Alliance
286 Passaic St., Passaic, NJ

For more info, call:
973-365-5740



Infant & Pediatric Health Services

Date/Time: Every Wednesday
1:00PM - 3:00PM
Every Friday
8:30AM - 12:00PM
1:00PM - 4:00PM

Place: City of Passaic
Health Division Clinic
68-72 Third St., Passaic, NJ

For more info, call: 973-365-5681

Breast, Cervical, Colorectal Cancer Screenings for Women

Provided by:
Rainbows of Hope CEED Program
St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center
703 Main St., Room A1401
Paterson, NJ 07503

For more info and to schedule your
screening call: 973-754-3562

All screening costs are free for eligible patients
without insurance

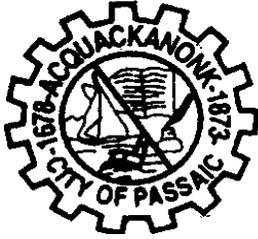


Prostate and Colorectal Screenings for Men

Provided by:
Rainbows of Hope CEED Program
St. Joseph's Regional Medical Center
703 Main St., Room A1401
Paterson, NJ 07503

For more info and to schedule your
screening call: 973-754-3562

All screening costs are free for eligible patients
without insurance



**A QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER OF THE
CITY OF PASSAIC
DIVISION OF HEALTH**

330 Passaic Street
Passaic, NJ 07055
Tel: 973-365-5605
Fax: 973-365-2242
Email: health@cityofpassaicnj.gov

www.cityofpassaic.com



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**City of Passaic
Division of Health**

330 Passaic Street
Passaic, NJ 07055

The mission of the Passaic Health Division is to deliver equitable and comprehensive superior public health services that ensure the protection, promotion, and enhancement of the health, wellness, and general welfare of all who live, visit, and work in the City of Passaic.

Contributing Writers:

Carlos Perez, Jr., M.P.A.

Health Officer

Lyra Diao, B.S., C.H.E.S.

Health Educator

Mark Mora, B.S., C.H.E.S.

Field Representative/Health Education

Araceli Lopez, Student Intern

William Paterson University-Community Health

The Focus is not copyrighted. Any or all parts may be reproduced without permission. However, an acknowledgment of the source would be appreciated. The following resources were used as references in this edition: American Cancer Society, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.gardasil.com. Reference to any site on the internet is provided as a service to readers and does not constitute or imply endorsement of the information on the web site by the City of Passaic Division of Health. The City of Passaic Division of Health is not responsible for the content of the pages found at these sites.

To: