



# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

## Dickinson County

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[www.didhd.org](http://www.didhd.org)

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 2007 – Michigan's *Year of Public Health* Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Kicks off Safe Homes = Safe Families Month in January

**Kingsford & Iron River, Michigan, January 12, 2007** - When you list your New Year resolutions this month, adding a home safety inventory of quick, easy and inexpensive tests could help you prevent silent killers like radon and lead from harming you and your family members.

“Conducting some simple tests at home and taking simple steps to address any problems you may find can prevent cancer and other serious health problems,” said Ron Matonich, Environmental Health Director.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department recommends a home inventory that includes:

- Water testing, especially if you use a private well for drinking water. City water systems are continually monitored for water safety but it is up to homeowners to monitor their private wells for pollutants like bacteria and nitrates. A bacterial analysis can detect bacteria, including *E. coli*, an indicator of potential contamination with other serious pathogens such as hepatitis and salmonella. Depending on where you live, testing for pesticides or other factors may also be recommended. Water test kits are available at the health department.
- Radon testing of the air in your home. There are no obvious signs of radon, a colorless and odorless gas. It moves through small spaces in soils and rock and can enter buildings through openings in foundation floors or walls. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer, according to the American Lung Association. Radon test kits are available at the Health Department and in observance of “Radon Action Month” the price is half off the normal fee during the month of January.
- Lead testing paint from your home, if it was built before 1978, when many house paints included lead. Lead poisoning is usually caused by months or years of exposure to small amounts of lead in the home, work, or day care environment. Lead poisoning does not always produce symptoms, but it can be easily detected by a simple finger-stick blood test. Lead testing kits for your home are available at most hardware stores. If you are concerned about your child being exposed to lead, consult with your physician for blood testing to detect lead poisoning or contact the Health Department for further information.

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Children, older adults, and individuals with a chronic illness are particularly susceptible to environmental hazards, said Matonich. “But they are easy to identify and relatively easy to address. The Health Department staff can provide consultation for people who find an environmental health problem in their home - we’re always working to protect the public against threats to their health.”

For additional information, contact the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department in Kingsford 774-1868, in Iron River 265-9913 or visit our website at [www.didhd.org](http://www.didhd.org).

Additional information about the “**Public Health – For Michigan. For You**” slogan and “2007: The Year of Public Health” can be found at [www.malph.org](http://www.malph.org).

*Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Serving the Community Since 1936 in  
Health Protection, Health Education and Disease Prevention.*

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