



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Kicks off Safe Homes = Safe Families Month in June

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, June 2, 2008 – As you kick off your summer activities 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 Joyce Ziegler, Community Health Services Director.

Ron Matonich, Environmental Health Director, recommends a home inventory that includes:

- Annual 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.
- One-time radon testing of the air near your home’s foundation. 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.
- 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.

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

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing health care, and protecting the environment. For additional information about preparing for a healthy pregnancy and baby, contact your local health department office or visit www.didhd.org.

Additional information about the “**Public Health – For Michigan. For You**” slogan can be found at www.malph.org.

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