

ON THE SAFE SIDE

Safety & Health Newsletter



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January is National Radon Action Month

The EPA recognizes January as Radon Action Month, in an effort to better inform homeowners and occupants of the potential risks that radon presents, and to get people to take action to resolve those issues before it affects the well-being of their families.

If there is one thing that we can all agree on, it's the importance of protecting our health. And yet, radon and its health risks go overlooked in many homes across America- despite it being the #1 cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), radon is estimated to cause around 22,000 lung cancer deaths in the United States every year. So why the oversight when it comes to radon?

Well, it wasn't until the mid-1980s that elevated levels of radon in homes were recognized as a potential public health threat. Then on top of that, every state's risk level is drastically different due to things like terrain, uranium content in the soil, and how porous surface rock formations are.

What is Radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas with no color, smell, or taste. It is released from bedrock material and passes through the soil, diluting in the air before entering buildings. Granites, migmatites, some clays and tills are particularly rich in uranium and radium, which decay into radon. Radon exhalating from the ground beneath buildings is the main source of radon in indoor air.

Possible symptoms of exposure include shortness of breath (difficulty breathing), a new or worsening cough, pain or tightness in the chest, hoarseness, or trouble swallowing.

January
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Your Health



Transient
Ischemic
Attack
(TIA)

Safety
&
Attitude

Upcoming
Events

How are We Exposed to Radon?



Radon may enter buildings through cracks in the floor, gaps in construction, windows, drains, or spaces around cables and pipes.

Radon does not dilute in indoor air as quickly as outside and tends to accumulate in the enclosed spaces of buildings, serving as a significant source of public exposure to radiation.

Is Radon in Water?

Radon can dissolve and accumulate in groundwater sources, such as water pumps or drilled wells in uranium-rich geological areas. Radon in water can be released into the air during routine water use such as showering or laundry.

What Homes Are at Higher Risk for Radon?

- **Foundation Type:** Older homes with dirt floors in the basement have nothing to slow the rise of radon gas from the soil. Exposed crawl spaces also allow radon to rise into living areas unchecked.
- **Foundation Damage:** Radon can seep through concrete, but foundation slabs and walls with cracks make it easier for extra radon gas to seep in.
- **Other Construction Gaps:** Any gap in the foundation can allow radon to enter the home. Common examples are gaps around pipes and wires, construction joints where walls and floors meet, and open sump pumps.
- **Well Water:** Groundwater can also contain radon. If you rely on a well, have your water quality tested regularly for contaminants, including radon.

Should I test for Radon?

All homeowners should test their homes for radon. Radon has been found in all 50 states and all types of houses, so it is impossible to predict which homes are safe without conducting a test. To get the most accurate results, have your home tested for radon by a professional.

For more information visit:

www.epa.gov/radon

www.cdc.gov/radon

What is *Transient Ischemic Attack* (TIA)?

A transient ischemic attack (TIA) is a stroke that lasts only a few minutes. It occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is briefly interrupted.

Often called a mini-stroke, don't let the "mini" part fool you. TIAs are often warning signs that a person is at risk for a more serious and debilitating stroke in the future. About 1 in 3 people who have a TIA will eventually have a stroke, with about half occurring within a year after the TIA.

A TIA can happen when a blood clot gets lodged in an artery that supplies blood to your brain. Without regular blood flow, your brain is starved for oxygen and can't work the way it normally does. That's why you get symptoms like muscle weakness or slurred speech with a TIA.

Clots form when you have a buildup of a fatty, waxy substance called plaque in your arteries. They can take shape anywhere in your body, and float along until they get stuck somewhere. If that "somewhere" happens to be an artery that goes to your brain, you can have a TIA.



Symptoms?

TIA symptoms, which usually occur suddenly, are similar to those of stroke but do not last as long. Most symptoms of a TIA disappear within an hour, although they may persist for up to 24 hours. Symptoms can include:

- Numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Difficulty with walking, dizziness
- Confusion or difficulty in talking or understanding speech
- Loss of balance and coordination

How do I know?

There is no way to tell whether symptoms are from a TIA or an acute stroke; you should assume that all stroke-like symptoms signal an emergency and should not wait to see if they go away.

A prompt evaluation (within 60 minutes) is necessary to identify the cause of the TIA and determine appropriate therapy. Depending on your medical history and the results of a medical examination, the doctor may recommend drug therapy or surgery to reduce the risk of stroke in people who have had a TIA.

The use of antiplatelet agents, particularly aspirin, is a standard treatment for people at risk for stroke. Individuals with atrial fibrillation (irregular beating of the heart) may be prescribed anticoagulants.

Prevention

Many strokes can be prevented by heeding the warning signs of TIAs and treating underlying risk factors. The most important treatable factors linked to TIAs, and stroke are:

- High blood pressure
- Cigarette smoking
- Heart disease
- Carotid artery disease
- Diabetes
- Heavy use of alcohol

Medical help is available to reduce and eliminate these factors. Lifestyle changes such as eating a balanced diet, maintaining healthy weight, exercising, and enrolling in smoking and alcohol cessation programs can also reduce these factors.

Stroke can happen at any age...

The older you are, the more likely you are to have a stroke. The chance of having a stroke about doubles every 10 years after age 55. Although stroke is common among older adults, many people younger than 65 years also have strokes.

In fact, about one in seven strokes occur in adolescents and young adults ages 15 to 49. Experts think younger people are having more strokes because more young people have obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF A STROKE

When it comes to stroke care, time is of the essence.

REMEMBER: BE FAST



BALANCE

• Sudden loss of balance



EYES

• Sudden loss of vision in one or both eyes



FACE

• Uneven face (facial droop) or uneven smile



ARM

• Sudden arm weakness



SPEECH

• Sudden slurred speech or trouble speaking, confusion



TIME

• Time is critical. CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

ATTITUDE

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think, say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our attitudes.

Charles R. Swindoll

Upcoming Events:

→ PPE Roadshow:

- ✧ SFO (January 9th and 10th)
- ✧ MIA (January 22nd thru 25th)



What's wrong with this picture?



Always use fall protection equipment when working at heights and use proper maintenance stands which are more stable than ladders.

Got Feedback?

Suggestions on Safety topics in upcoming newsletters?

Email: Safety@local591.com