

Tuscarawas County Health Department

897 East Iron Avenue Dover, Ohio 44622

www.tchdnow.org T: (330)343-5555

Reducing High Indoor Radon Levels Can Lower Cancer Risk

Test kits are a simple way to protect your family from this health hazard.

In recognition of National Radon Action Month, Ohio Department of Health Director Amy Acton, MD, MPH, is encouraging Ohioans to test their homes for the radioactive gas this January and take steps to reduce risk if elevated levels are detected.

"Long-term exposure to high levels of radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer overall and the top cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers," Dr. Acton said. "Running this easy, inexpensive test is an important first step in protecting your family from a devastating disease that kills thousands of Ohioans each year."

Colorless and odorless, radon is produced naturally with the decay of uranium in rocks and soil. It can migrate into any type of home through cracks or openings in the foundation.

According to data collected by the ODH Radon Education and Licensing Program, elevated levels of the gas have been found in homes in all 88 Ohio counties. It's estimated that such levels are present in about half of all Ohio homes.

The Program offers free testing kits to Ohio homeowners with household incomes less than \$80,500. Other Ohioans can order the kits for a discounted \$10.95, which includes analysis.

Alternatively, have your home evaluated by a radon tester licensed by ODH to follow specific protocols (continued on page 2; Radon)



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

If your household income is less than \$80,500 you can order a free test kit here, other Ohioans can order the kits for \$10.95 with includes analysis :

<https://www.doctorhomeair.com/ohio-free/>

Annual Meeting Reminder

The DAC Annual Meeting will be held on March 17, 2020 at 7pm. Dinner will begin at 6pm in the Social Hall at Ragersville United Church of Christ.

You should be receiving the meeting notice and agenda in the coming weeks. **Please remember to RSVP!!**

TCHD To Offer Help Me Grow Home Visiting Program

Beginning in Early 2020, the Tuscarawas County Health Department (TCHD) will begin to offer Help Me Grow home visiting services, an evidence-based program that promotes healthy growth and development for babies and young children from birth to age three. Through Help Me Grow, professional home visitors will meet with pregnant women or new parents to empower them with the skills, tools, and the confidence they need to nurture the healthy growth of their children. Help Me Grow is funded through the Ohio Department of Health. In October, Health Commissioner, Katie Seward, worked with the Tuscarawas County Board of Health to research the Help Me Grow home visiting program after learning that Ohio Guidestone (PFCS) would be discontinuing the service at the end of this year.

Help Me Grow home visiting services are available to pregnant women or new parents of young children from birth to age three. Topics covered during a typical home visit include healthy pregnancies, baby and child health, breastfeeding, nutrition, immunizations, child growth and development, discipline, toilet training, child safety, household safety, and local resources. For more information or to schedule a Help Me Grow home visit for yourself or a loved one, email HMGreferrals@helpmegrow.org or fill out an online referral form at <https://odhgateway.odh.ohio.gov/ochids/public/refer>

(continued from page 1, Radon) Test your home every two years or after renovations, including the installation of windows, exterior doors, insulation, a roof, or a furnace or air conditioner.

If elevated levels are detected, it is important to act to protect yourself and your family. ODH also licenses radon mitigation contractors, who can be found here. Before hiring a contractor, use ODH's locator, get more than one estimate, ask for references, and check with a reliable consumer group.

Radon is measured in picocuries, which indicate the gas' rate of radioactive decay. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends that indoor levels under 4 picocuries per liter of air (4pCi/l).

Mitigation often involves sealing cracks in the foundation and installing PVC pipe and a fan to pull radon from underneath a home's foundation and vent it to the outdoors. ODH does not recommend sealing alone.

The ODH Radon Education and Licensing Program is federally funded and works in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and local health departments across Ohio.

For general questions about radon's health effects or to discuss radon testing, contact ODH radon education staff at 1-800-523-4439 or indoor.radon@odh.ohio.gov.

~ Article Obtained from the Ohio Department of Health

Tuscarawas County Health Department Welcomes Back Provider



The Tuscarawas County Health Department's Primary Medical Clinic is welcoming back Certified Nurse Practitioner Melissa Mutschelknaus. Mutschelknaus has over 10 years' experience as a Nurse Practitioner and over 20 years in the medical field. Mutschelknaus had previously been a provider at the Health Department from 2014-2016. Mutschelknaus currently works at Tuscarawas County Medical Specialist and will be joining TCHD on Fridays

Tuscarawas County Health Department Primary Medical Clinic is located at 897 East Iron Avenue in Dover, Ohio. She will be added to the medical team who currently includes Dr. Daniel Blumer DO, Dr. Marcel Nwizu MD, Dr. Lucille Stine MD, Alexandra Miller APRN and Robin Adams-Weber CNP.

Mutschelknaus specializes in family medicine, gastroenterology, and reproductive health and wellness. She will be seeing patient's on Fridays at TCHD's Medical Clinic beginning in February 2020. TCHD's Medical Clinic serves patients with Medicare, Medicaid or private healthcare coverage, and there's also a sliding fee scale for those without insurance. If you would like to make an appointment with Mutschelknaus or any of the other providers, please call 330-343-5555.

Communicable Disease Cases Increase in 2019

In 2019, TCHD received reports of 426 total communicable diseases, whereas only 407 were reported in 2018. A communicable, or infectious disease, is a disease caused by microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi that can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. The most reported communicable disease in 2019 was Chlamydia with 207 cases reported. Chlamydia is a common STD that can infect both men and women. It can cause serious, permanent damage to a woman's reproductive system. This can make it difficult or impossible for her to get pregnant later on. Other communicable diseases that saw an increase from 2018 to 2019 included Gonorrhea, Hepatitis A, B and C, Lyme Disease, Pertussis, Legionellosis, E. Coli, Hemophilus Influenza and Yersiniosis. The 2019 communicable disease report will be release later in the first quarter of 2020.

Safe Communities of Tuscarawas County 2019 Traffic Fatality Report

From January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019, the Ohio State Highway Patrol reported a total of 2,501 vehicle crashes investigated in Tuscarawas County. Of the 2,501 crashes investigated, Tuscarawas County experienced 9 fatal crashes with 10 crash fatalities. In 2018 Tuscarawas County experienced a total of 11 fatal crashes with 12 fatalities, which was an improvement from 2017 when Tuscarawas County experienced a total of 19 fatal crashes with 20 fatalities.



"When we look at the statistics, we know that OVI education and enforcement needs to continue to be a top traffic safety priority in our County," said Kelly Snyder, Safe Communities Program Coordinator for the Tuscarawas County Health Department. "67% of the fatal crashes in 2019 involved some type of impairment. Other factors in the fatal crashes were unbelted occupants, pedestrian fatalities, and speed."

The Safe Communities Coalition is comprised of partners from a variety of agencies and organizations in Tuscarawas County. "Each partner brings a different perspective to the table. These partners are critical to the success of Safe Communities' traffic safety efforts," explained Snyder.

Safe Communities conducts traffic safety media campaigns, coordinates events and activities, and distributes educational materials to help prevent fatal traffic crashes and injuries from occurring in Tuscarawas County. In the past year, Safe Communities of Tuscarawas County reached over 6,000 people through outreach at more than 25 events throughout the County. Some events included working in many of the local high schools to educate youth about the importance of safe driving. The group also spent time educating the driving population of Tuscarawas County on impaired driving, seatbelt use, distracted driving, and motorcycle awareness.

On February 26th, 2020, members of the Safe Communities Coalition will be meeting to review the traffic fatalities from the fourth quarter of 2019 to identify any trends or measures that can be taken to prevent future traffic fatalities in our County. If you would like to know more about the Safe Communities project, please visit www.tchdnow.org/safe-communities.html

For more information about the Ohio Traffic Safety Office and statewide efforts to improve safety on Ohio's roadways, visit <http://ohiohighwaysafetyoffice.ohio.gov/index.stm>