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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

January 9, 2012  
Contact: 201-634-2707

## **Free Radon Test Kits Available**

*BERGEN COUNTY, NJ*—In recognition of National Radon Action Month, the Bergen County Department of Health Services' Environmental Program and the Bergen County Cancer Coalition are cooperating with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection on a "Radon Awareness Program" and a "Newborn Pilot Program." Both programs emphasize the importance of testing homes for radon levels to protect the health of homeowners and their families. To promote radon testing in Bergen County, a limited supply of free radon test kits are available on a first come, first serve basis to county residents only.

As part of the Newborn Pilot Program, free testing kits will be available on Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup> from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Babies 'R Us, 545 State Highway 17 South, Paramus. Proof of residency in Bergen County must be shown.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive, invisible, odorless gas that poses a serious health risk and its exposure can be easily ignored by homeowners. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and has been identified as the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers resulting in approximately 500 deaths per year in New Jersey and approximately 21,000 deaths per year in the United States. If a homeowner smokes tobacco products and their home has an elevated radon level, the risk of developing lung cancer increases.

Radon occurs naturally when uranium and radium break down in the soil and in rock formations. Radon gas moves up through the soil and finds its way into homes through cracks in the foundation and openings around sump pumps, pipes and drains. Radon can build to unhealthy levels if trapped indoors, especially during colder months when windows and doors are kept closed.

Testing procedures are simple. Short term tests are typically conducted over a two to seven day period. If the test indicates a radon problem, radon mitigation systems can be installed at a cost similar to that of other home repairs.

As part of the Radon Awareness Program initiative, county residents can contact the Bergen County Department of Health Services Environmental Program at 201-634-2803 for information on receiving a free radon test kit. Kits will also be available at county health services for \$20 after the supply of free kits has been distributed. Some home improvement or hardware stores sell test kits as well.

For more information on radon, contact the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Radon Program at (800) 648-0394 or visit [www.njradon.org](http://www.njradon.org). For information about tobacco use that increases the risk of lung cancer especially in homes that have elevated radon levels, call the Bergen County Cancer Coalition Coordinator at 201-634-2707.

The Bergen County Cancer Coalition is made possible through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services' Office of Cancer Control and Prevention. For more information on Comprehensive Cancer Control in New Jersey, please visit: [www.njcancer.gov](http://www.njcancer.gov).