

Healthy Indoor Environments

Where We Live, Learn and Play

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Georgia Healthy Housing
one change many impacts

Inside this issue:

- How to winterize your home
- Why you should test your home for radon
- Tips for maintaining a healthy home
- Winter home safety
- Healthy home hacks

*NEAFCS 2025
Award winning newsletter*

*“An Ounce of Prevention is
worth a Pound of Cure.”*

Benjamin Franklin

More information & tips about maintaining your home in the UGA Extension [Home Maintenance Checklist](#).

How to Winterize Your Home

Written by Olivia Handley, Coweta County FACS Extension Agent

Fall is a great time to evaluate your home for the upcoming cold weather. A few preventative steps now can save time and money in the future.

- ♦ Clean out your gutters and remove debris. Also, check for rusty or failing gutters and repair as needed.
- ♦ Repair or apply weather stripping around doors and windows. Use foam or caulk for large holes. Place draft guards along the bottom of doors and apply window insulation film over windowpanes.
- ♦ Check areas where pipes enter exterior walls and make sure holes are filled with insulation.
- ♦ Insulate water pipes in uninsulated areas of house that are exposed to outdoor temperatures. This includes basements, attics, and crawlspaces.
- ♦ Drip pipes during freezing temperatures and open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors under sinks to allow warm air around pipes to prevent freezing.
- ♦ Disconnect and drain water hoses from outside spigots and cover with an insulated faucet cover to prevent water from freezing in hoses and pipes.
- ♦ Check to make sure the heating system is running properly. Get a professional tune-up if needed.



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Exterior

Spring	Fall	
☐	☐	Inspect all wood framing for signs of rats, bats, roaches, termites, squirrels, mice, and other pests. Contact a professional as needed to treat.
☐	☐	Check exterior siding and trim for loose pieces and chipped or peeling paint. Repair and repaint as needed.
☐	☐	Check for and replace decaying or damaged trim around the windows and doors.
☐	☐	Inspect foundation and masonry for cracks. Hire a professional to repair as needed.
☐	☐	Check for signs of leaks.

Why you should test your home for radon

Written by Rebecca Cantrell, Extension Radon Educator

Radon is an invisible, odorless gas that can pose serious health risks if it accumulates inside your home. Formed naturally from the breakdown of uranium in soil and rock, radon can seep into houses through cracks in foundations. In Georgia, where geology and soil composition make radon common, testing your home is especially important.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, responsible for about 21,000 of deaths each year. Testing is the only way to know if your home has unsafe levels. Even newly built homes can be affected, regardless of neighborhood or construction type.

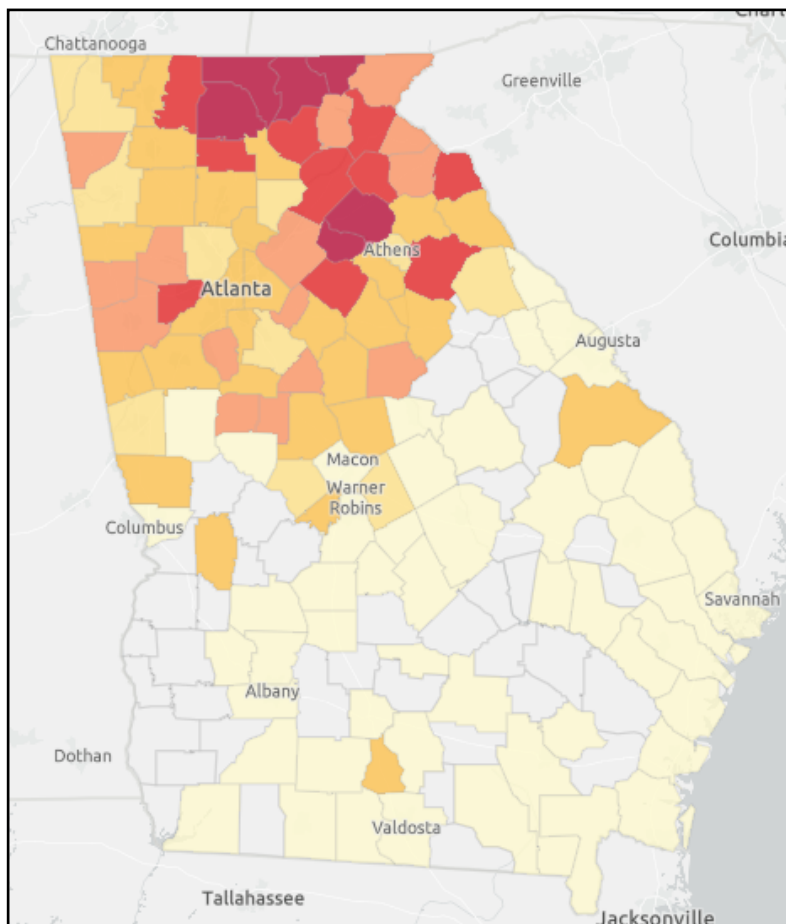


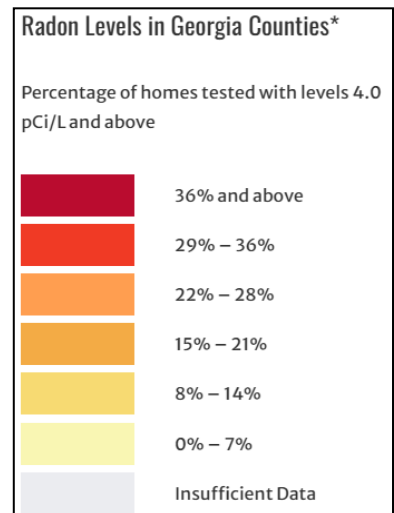
Image source: <https://radon.uga.edu/>

Fortunately, testing for radon is simple and affordable. Short-term radon test kits are available through the [UGA Radon Program](#) for \$15. The EPA recommends taking action when the radon level is 4.0 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or greater. If elevated levels are detected, mitigation systems can be installed to safely vent radon outdoors, protecting your family's health.

For Georgia homeowners, testing isn't merely a precaution, it's a vital step in ensuring a safe living environment. Taking action today can prevent serious health issues tomorrow.

Contact UGA Radon for questions or to obtain more information.

ugaradon@uga.edu
(706) 583-0602



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Tips for Maintaining a Healthy Home

Written by Jackie E. Ogden, CFCS, Chatham County Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent

Good health starts at home! There are some simple steps you can take to ensure that your home is healthy and safe for you and your family.

Keep it Dry. Damp homes provide an environment for dust mites, roaches, rodents and molds. All of these can cause or worsen asthma. In addition, moisture can damage the building materials in your home.

Keep it Contaminant Free. Control or eliminate contaminants such as lead, radon, carbon monoxide (CO), secondhand smoke, and other chemicals. You can test for [radon](#) and lead; install a CO detector; don't allow smoking indoors; and reduce the number of chemicals in, and around, your home. Also, leave your shoes at the door to reduce tracking-in debris.

Keep it Pest Free. Exposure to pests such as roaches and rodents can trigger an asthma attack. Reduce pests by cleaning regularly, not leaving food out and reducing clutter.

Keep it Safe. Injuries such as falls, burns, and poisoning occur most often in the home, especially with children and visitors. Store household cleaners out of reach and remove tripping hazards.

Keep it Clean. Clean homes reduce pest infestation and exposure to contaminants. Reduce the number of cleaning products that you bring into your home, or switch to green cleaning products.

Keep it Well Maintained. Poorly maintained homes are at risk for moisture, pest problems, and injury hazards. Deteriorated lead-based paint is the primary cause of children being harmed by lead. Inspect your home every 6 months and make needed minor repairs before they become major repairs.

Keep it Well Ventilated. Having a fresh air supply to your home is important to reduce exposure to indoor air pollutants and to maintain respiratory health. Change the air filters on the heating system and use the fan when showering.

Keep it Temperature Controlled. Homes that do not have balanced and consistent temperatures may place your family at increased risk from exposure to extreme cold, heat, or humidity. Keep the temperature in your home comfortable and don't block off or close heat vents.

Visit [UGA Extension](#) to learn as much as you can about maintaining a healthy and safe home. Be sure to get your family involved!



Winter Home Safety

Written by Olivia Handley, Coweta County Extension FACS Agent

Winter months can pose some special challenges to home safety. These tips will help decrease your risk and improve your home's overall safety.

Check your heating system. If you have an older system, consider hiring a professional to inspect it and make sure it's running efficiently and properly. Change filters as needed. Clean systems run more efficiently.

Wood burning stoves and fireplaces need to be inspected and serviced yearly by a professional to make sure they operate properly and there is no buildup in the chimney. Also make sure carbon monoxide is being vented properly.

Carbon monoxide (CO) gas is easily pulled inside your home if you operate generators or propane heaters in closed spaces, such as attics or garages. Exposure to CO can be fatal.

Smoke alarms and CO detectors need to be in good working condition. Replace batteries if needed.

Space heaters should not be used near curtains or furniture. Leave plenty of room for air circulation.

Keep the heat on in the winter to avoid frozen pipes, which will cost more to repair than a high heating bill.

Outdoor steps and walkways should be free from ice. Apply sand as needed.

Prepare for winter storms by stocking up on extra canned goods, ready-to-eat meal items and batteries while out shopping.

With a little preparation and work, you and your home can be ready for any weather that may be coming this winter.

Healthy Home Hacks

~ Pamela Turner & Diane Bales ~

Remove odors by placing a bowl of white vinegar on top of the refrigerator.

Establish a "shoe free" zone inside your home to reduce dirt and pollutants brought indoors.

Declutter using the 10-10 method. Set the timer for 10 minutes and put away or discard/recycle 10 items.



UGA Extension [Healthy Indoor Environments](https://healthyhomes.uga.edu)
(healthyhomes.uga.edu)



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