

MILLS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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Radon Action Month is Underway

January is “Radon Action Month” in Iowa. Radon is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that causes no immediate health symptoms, but long-term exposures can cause lung cancer. It comes from the breakdown of uranium in soil. Simple test kits can reveal the amount of radon in any building and are available at low cost through Mills County Public Health.

IDPH Radon program manager Rick Welke recommends testing all homes and apartments in Iowa. “The only way to know if a home or building has elevated radon levels is to test it,” said Welke. “Once detected, buildings with high levels of radon can be easily fixed with simple and affordable venting techniques.”

Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. As they break down further, lung tissue can be damaged, which can lead to lung cancer. Not everyone exposed to elevated levels of radon will develop lung cancer and the amount of time between exposure and the onset of the disease may be many years. Persons who smoke or have been smokers are at 10 times more risk than persons who have never smoked.

Radon gas seeps into a house from the soil around and under the home; through cracks in the foundation, floor or walls; through hollow-block walls; and through openings around floor drains, pipes and sump pumps. Radon has been detected in new homes and in old homes, and in homes with or without basements. Test kits are simple to use and inexpensive. They can be purchased in most hardware stores or by calling Mills County Public Health at 527-9699.

Information about reducing Radon hazards in your home as well as a listing of licensed measurement and mitigation specialists can be found at www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp. Additional information is available from the Radon Hotline at 800-383-5992 or online at www.RadonInIowa.com.