



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

MEDIA RELEASE

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Public Health Joins Other Organizations Stressing Radon Testing in Iowa Homes

(Mason City) - The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health joins the Iowa Department of Public Health, the American Lung Association of Iowa, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in encouraging Iowans to test their homes for radon and take action to reduce elevated radon levels. Many Iowa homeowners and renters are not aware of the presence of radon gas in their home, despite it being a deadly carcinogen.

Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that is invisible (colorless, odorless, and tasteless), and is the second-leading cause of lung cancer. Everyone living in Iowa should know the following about radon:

1. Elevated radon levels in a home is more common in Iowa than any other state in the U.S. An estimated 5 out of every 7 homes in Iowa have elevated radon levels.
2. Any home can have elevated radon levels. This means old homes, new homes, drafty homes, insulated homes, homes with basements, and homes without basements are all at risk.
3. Smokers who live with radon in their homes are 8-9 times more likely to develop lung cancer from radon than non-smokers.
4. Technically, there is no 'safe' level of radon as it is a carcinogen, but a level under 4.0 picocuries/liter of air (the radon action level) minimizes your exposure to radon, lowering the risk of radon-induced lung cancer significantly. Based off health department test kit data, the 2016 average radon level for homes in Cerro Gordo County was 5.5 pCi/L. Of the test kits sold by the Health Department in 2016 to Cerro Gordo County residents, 20 of them tested between 8-20 pCi/L last year; which is 2-5 times the radon action level of 4.

Scientifically-based evidence over the last 50 years confirms again and again the health risks of radon exposure. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared radon a problem through a national health advisory report against radon stating, "Indoor radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, and breathing it over prolonged periods can present a significant health risk to families all over the country. It's important to know that this threat is completely

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preventable. Radon can be detected with a simple test and fixed through well-established venting techniques.”

Take the first step in prevention and get your home tested for radon today. The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health has a limited supply of free test kits to give away to Iowa residents in January. They are available to residents who have not tested their home in the last two years (1 test kit per person, while supplies last!). The Health Department sells test kits year-round for \$6. For more information on radon visit www.cghealth.com or call 641-421-9339. Iowans can also call the Iowa Radon Hotline at: 1-800-383-5992

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