

### JANUARY IS RADON AWARENESS MONTH

#### What is Radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas, which you cannot see, taste, or smell, and it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Radon occurs from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, water, and rocks, and is found in the air you breathe. This air can seep into homes and buildings through cracks and holes in the foundation, where it can become trapped inside. Radon can be found in buildings new or old and it is impossible to tell if there is a radon problem without testing. Testing is relatively simple and inexpensive and is highly recommended.

**Radon is the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Leading Cause of  
Lung Cancer.**



#### Is Radon a Problem in Scott County?



Unfortunately radon is a problem in Scott County. In fact, it is a problem in all of Iowa's counties and high levels have even been found in every state! According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Scott County is in County Radon Zone 1, which is the highest potential for dangerous levels of radon. The EPA estimates that in the United States 1 out of every 15 homes has elevated radon levels. The good news is that there are ways to fix radon problems.

#### Test Your Home Today!

The Scott County Health Department urges you to test the radon level in your home. **A limited supply of free radon test kits are available to Scott County residents and can be picked up at the Scott County Administrative Center's 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Meeting Room, located at 600 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Davenport, on Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 to 12:00 p.m. or until supplies run out. Radon kits will be given on a first-come, first-serve basis only with a limit of 1 radon kit per address with a maximum of 2 addresses.** You may also purchase a radon test kit from your local hardware store. Testing for radon is the only way to know if you or your family is at risk. For more information about radon, visit the Scott County Health Department's website at [www.scottcountyiowa.com](http://www.scottcountyiowa.com) or call 563-326-8618.

**Testing Your Home Is  
The ONLY Way to  
Know If You Have a  
Radon Problem.**



If you would like to receive this newsletter and other Scott County Health Department press releases electronically, please add your name to our e-mail list on our website at: [www.scottcountyiowa.com/health](http://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health).

## What Happens If Your Home Tests High for Radon?

Fortunately, there are ways to fix radon problems. Radon reduction systems work and are not too costly. Some of these systems can reduce the levels of radon by up to 99%. Certified Radon Mitigation Specialists are trained to identify and correct radon problems in homes and buildings. For a list of Certified Radon Mitigation Specialists in Iowa, visit the Iowa Department of Public Health's Radon Program website at: <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp> or call 1-800-383-5992.



## New Home Construction and Radon-Resistant Features



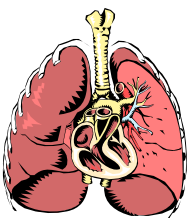
Radon can be found in new homes, too. If you are building a home, it is recommended to include radon-resistant features in the plan since Scott County is in a high radon potential area. It is cheap and easy to add these features at the time of construction. Even after installing radon-resistance features to the home, it should still be tested for radon before occupancy. If the radon level is still not low enough, it is simpler and less expensive to reduce the radon levels further than it would have been to add the radon-resistance features later.

## Home Sales and Radon

Many prospective home buyers want to know the radon level of a home before they agree to purchase. Many times this information is either disclosed at the time of sale by the current owners or if radon levels are unknown, they are sometimes tested during the home inspection. If high radon levels are found, some prospective buyers will require the owner to fix the problem before the sale is finalized. Some buyers may request the radon level of an area of the home that was not previously tested such as a basement that the buyer plans to finish. It is a good idea to test your home for radon and if there is a problem, fix it before you try to sell your home. This will save you and the buyer time and will ensure that you and your family are safe from the effects of radon in the meantime.



## What are the Health Risks of Radon?



Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon gas radioactive particles are breathed into the lungs where they get trapped. This is what damages the lungs and can lead to lung cancer. If you are a smoker and have high levels of radon in your home, your chances of getting lung cancer are increased. Your chances of getting lung cancer depends upon the amount of time you spend in your home, the radon levels in your home, and whether or not you ever have or currently smoke.

### Resources:

- "A Citizen's Guide to Radon, The Guide to Protecting Yourself and Your Family From Radon", Revised September 2005: [www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/pubs/citguide.html)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)