



January is National Radon Action month. Radon is a radioactive gas that is colorless and odorless. It originates in the soil from the natural decay of uranium and radium that was ground-up and left behind by glaciers. Radon gas enters your home in the following ways:

- ❖ Exposed soil or rock in crawlspaces
- ❖ Floor wall joints
- ❖ Floor drains
- ❖ Cracks or flaws in floor slab
- ❖ Hollow objects – support posts
- ❖ Around utility posts
- ❖ Cracks or flaws in foundation walls

The only way to know if you have a radon problem is to have your home tested.

Facts about radon:

- ❖ Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer (second to smoking) in the United States.
- ❖ The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon gas causes approximately 21,000 deaths per year nationally, most of these are preventable.
- ❖ The EPA has set a recommended radon action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). The recommend that all Iowa homes be tested for radon and fixed if over 4 pCi/L.
- ❖ Iowa leads the nation for the highest percentage of homes with elevated indoor radon levels. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) says approximately 72% of basements or levels in contact with soil have high radon.
- ❖ **The average Radon level in Clay County is 9.7 pCi/L (recommended is 4 pCi/L)**
- ❖ Radon test kits are available from your local environmental health office, or from the Iowa AIR Coalition (1-800-383-5992.), or retail stores.

Luckily, radon is easy and inexpensive to detect. However, it is up to you to find out whether radon is a problem in your home. The best time to conduct tests is during the cold weather months, like January, when the windows are closed. If you are planning to buy a new or existing home, make sure to have the home tested as part of the purchase agreement.

**For more information on radon contact the Clay County Environmental Health office at 712/262-8165. Test kits will be given to the first 50 people who stop at the office located at 300 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Spencer, Iowa.**

You can also check out the following websites for more information and maps:

[www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/radon.asp), <http://www.iowaaircoalition.org/>,  
<http://www.epa.gov/radon/pdfs/buildradonout.pdf>, [www.healthhouse.org](http://www.healthhouse.org) . To find out more about radon and lung cancer health studies performed in Iowa, go to [www.cheec.uiowa.edu/misc/radon.html](http://www.cheec.uiowa.edu/misc/radon.html).