

Epi Update for Friday, January 20, 2023

CENTER FOR ACUTE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY (CADE)
BUREAU OF HIV, STD, AND HEPATITIS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Items for this week's Epi Update include

- **Radon Action Month and Radon Awareness Week**
- **Norovirus prevention**
- **Infographic: Radon by the numbers**

Radon Action Month and Radon Awareness Week

January is designated by the EPA as National Radon Action Month and CDC has designated January 23-27 as Radon Awareness Week. In Iowa, Governor Kim Reynolds has declared January 2023 as Radon Action Month.

The theme of this year's Radon Awareness Week is *The 5Ws of Radon: What's Your Radon Story?* The theme focuses on **who** radon affects, **what** the health effects of radon are, **where** someone can be exposed to radon, **when** to install a radon reduction system, and **why** we should raise awareness about radon.

Radon is a natural radioactive gas that can cause cancer. You can't see, smell or taste it, but radon may be in your home. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in smokers. According to the EPA, the entire state of Iowa is considered at high risk for radon gas in homes. High levels of radon can be found in any type of home, so it is important for everyone to test their home.

You can reach the Iowa Radon Hotline by calling 1-800-383-5992 to order low-cost radon test kits and find answers to your radon questions.

For more information from Iowa HHS about radon, visit idph.iowa.gov/radon.

For more information from CDC about radon, visit www.cdc.gov/radon/index.html.

Norovirus prevention

Norovirus tends to peak during the winter months, and Iowa HHS and local public health partners have investigated multiple suspect and confirmed norovirus outbreaks in recent weeks. Norovirus is the most common cause of outbreaks of gastrointestinal illness in Iowa.

Norovirus is extremely infectious and can spread directly from person to person, via contaminated food, or from contact with contaminated surfaces. This is why proper hand washing is extremely important at all times, but especially after using the restroom and before preparing or eating food. Staying home while ill with vomiting or diarrhea is critical to prevent spread.

Suspected outbreaks of any cause are reportable to Iowa HHS. To report an outbreak, contact CADE immediately at 515-242-5935 during business hours or 515-323-4360 after hours.

For more information about norovirus, visit www.cdc.gov/norovirus/about/index.html.

Radon by the Numbers

 **21,000**
lung cancer deaths per year

#1
environmental
cause of any cancer



#1
cause of lung cancer among
people who have never smoked



10x risk of lung cancer
among people who
smoke compared with people who
never smoked with same radon exposure



1 in 15
homes in the US have
high radon levels



If radon levels are ≥ 4.0 pCi/L, EPA recommends installing a radon reduction system.

This equals...



200 or **8**
chest x-rays per year cigarettes per day



pCi/L is shorthand for picocuries per liter, the units of measurement of the amount of radon in an air sample.

2 steps
to protect yourself
from radon-associated
lung cancer:

Test your home's
radon levels.



Fix your home if radon
levels are ≥ 4 pCi/L.



www.cdc.gov/radon

Data sources: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the American Association of Radon Scientists & Technologists

To view in full size, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/radon/radon-numbers-ld.html>.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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