



## Does Your Home Have High Radon Levels?

It has been said that 75% of the homes in Iowa have elevated levels of Radon, nationally the number is 7%. 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

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 and the only way to find out if your home has radon is to have it tested. You as the homeowner can do the test, send it in to the lab, and receive the results. The best time to conduct tests is during the cold weather months, like January, when the windows are closed.

### Radon Facts:

- ❖ In the United States, radon is the first leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers, and the second leading cause of lung cancer overall.
- ❖ The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that radon gas causes approximately 21,000 deaths per year nationally, most of these are preventable. Other comparisons - 17,400 deaths due to drunk driving, 8,000 deaths due to falls, 3,900 deaths due to drowning, and 2,800 deaths due to home fires
- ❖ The EPA has set a recommended radon action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L). They recommend that all Iowa homes be tested for radon and fixed if over 4 pCi/L.
- ❖ **The average Radon level in Monona County is 9.2 pCi/L (recommended is 4 pCi/L)**

Most radon problems can be corrected with a mitigation system costing between \$800 and \$2,000 installed by a certified contractor. Occasionally lower radon levels can be fixed using less expensive techniques such as sealing sump pits and other openings in the foundation. Always follow up with a test kit to make sure radon levels have been reduced.

When building a new home, it is a good idea and cost effective at this time to install a mitigation system during construction. When planning to buy a new or existing home, make sure to have the home tested as part of the purchase agreement. The State of Iowa only requires a brochure be given by realtors – Iowa Radon Home Buyers and Sellers Fact Sheet. Did you get one?

If asked if you would approve a radioactive plant to be built in your backyard and the answer you gave is no, then why would you want to go on living in a home where you live with it every day. Ask yourself this and then test your home. If levels are elevated, install a mitigation system.

For more information on radon contact the Monona County Environmental Health office at 712/433-3400, **free test kits are available, while supply lasts**, coupons can be found in the local newspapers and [www.mononacounty.org](http://www.mononacounty.org). You can now follow Monona County Environmental Health on Facebook and Twitter.

You can also check out the following websites for more information and maps: [www.radoninowa.com](http://www.radoninowa.com), <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/Radon/>, <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).