

Highlight on Health

An Emmons County Public Health Publication

Important Dates

January 1 - New Year's Day

January 3 - Festival of Sleep Day

January 3-9 - Folic Acid Awareness Week

January 17 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Office Open)

January 21 - International Hugging Day

January 23 - National Reading Day

January 28 - National Preschool Fitness Day

January 30 - World Leprosy Day

Monthly Awareness

- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- National Birth Defects Prevention Month
- National Blood Donor Month
- National Radon Action Month



Omicron Variant Reinforces Need for COVID Vaccination in 2022

North Dakotans have been learning in real time about COVID-19 once again, following the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.529, the Omicron variant.

Omicron is expected to spread more easily than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus, but health experts are still determining how much more easily. One study from the University of Hong Kong suggests Omicron may spread 70 times faster than the Delta variant. In some parts of the U.S., and the world, Omicron cases are doubling every 48 to 72 hours. Omicron is identified by more than twice the mutations displayed by the Delta variant. However, variant severity is not based on the number of mutations alone and more data will need to be collected before severity can be defined.

This new variant took three weeks to overtake Delta as the most common variant nationally. Omicron was first detected in specimens collected on Nov. 11, 2021, in Botswana, and November 14, 2021 in South Africa. On December 1, 2021, the first confirmed case of Omicron was confirmed in the United States. Four Omicron cases (two in Ward County, one in Burleigh County and one in

Cass County) were reported in North Dakota on Dec. 20. That same day, the CDC reported that Omicron was responsible for 73 percent of the country's COVID cases.

Vaccination remains the easiest and safest way to protect yourself against COVID-19. ECPH and the North Dakota Department of Health strongly recommend every individual receive a COVID-19 vaccination and/or booster shot as soon as they are eligible. Since vaccines were first made available in December 2020, nearly a million doses have been given to North Dakotans.

ECPH has administered about 2700 COVID-19 vaccine doses over the past 12 months. If you are not yet vaccinated, it has never been easier to get that initial dose. If it has been at least 6 months since you completed your second dose of Pfizer or Moderna vaccination, or 2 months since your Johnson & Johnson vaccination, you are eligible for a booster dose. To set up your appointment at ECPH, call (701) 254-4027.

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www.emmonsnd.com/public-health.html
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Silent Killer Radon a Significant Problem in North Dakota

The impact of radon in your life, particularly during the coldest months, can't be understated. This colorless, odorless and tasteless gas emits radioactive decay that is the second-leading cause of lung cancer nationally, when it is breathed in.

With Winter generally keeping individuals indoors through its coldest months, radon exposure is estimated to cause 21,000 lung cancer deaths nationally each year. Radon is particularly dangerous in this state.

North Dakota is one of two states in which every county receives the EPA's highest ranking of radon levels. A 1991 survey estimated the average indoor radon level to be at 1.3 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) in the U.S. About 63 percent of North Dakota homes have more than 4.0 pCi/L.

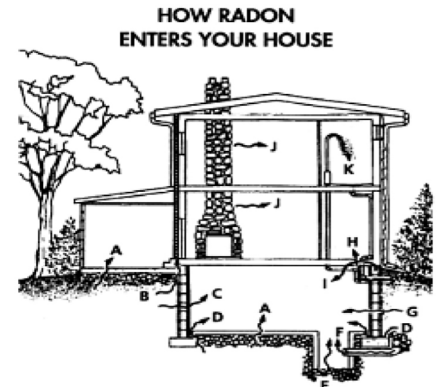
Knowledge about your home's radon levels is the first way to combat the potential health problems with this gas. Completing a radon test will give you information on the picocuries per

liter and may help you determine if you need to find preventative measures that stop radon from entering your home, or methods that will help dissipate radon levels after it has entered:

- Soil suction
 - Subslab suction
 - Drain-tile suction
 - Sump-hole suction
 - Block-wall suction
- Submembrane suction
- Active crawlspace depressurization
- Crawlspace ventilation
- Soil communication test
- Sealing cracks
- House or room pressurization
- Heat recovery ventilator (HRV)

More information about how to reduce radon in your home is available at https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-02/documents/2013_consumers_guide_to_radon_reduction.pdf. The Environmental Protection Agency's main radon home page is located at www.epa.gov/radon. More EPA radon publications are available online at www.epa.gov/radon/publications-about-radon.

Sources of Radon



- A. Cracks in concrete slabs
- B. Spaces behind brick veneer walls that rest on uncapped hollow-brick foundation
- C. Pores and cracks in concrete blocks or concrete walls
- D. Floor-wall joints
- E. Exposed soil, as in a sump
- F. Weeping (drain) tile, if drained to open sump
- G. Mortar joints
- H. Loose-fitting pipe penetrations
- I. Open tops of block walls
- J. Building materials such as some rocks
- K. Water (from some wells)

Source: NDDEQ



Take breaks while shoveling snow.
Overexertion can bring on a heart attack.

#BeInformed

Ready

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