

Health Matters



from the Kane County Health Department

— December 17, 2015 —

Trending Matters:



Flu Shots available in Aurora

Flu shots are available, weekdays,
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
at our Aurora office,
1240 N. Highland Avenue.

The cost is \$25,
payable by check or cash.

Vaccinations will be offered
throughout the flu season, while
supplies last.

January is National Radon Action Month, and a reminder to test your home for radon

Blame the unique geology in the Midwestern United States, and northeast Illinois in particular: Homes in Kane County have the potential for higher levels of radon. This is because the rocks and soil beneath our feet can contain uranium, which can produce radon.

Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas that occurs naturally from the breakdown of uranium. You can't see or smell it; testing is the only way to know your level of exposure. Radon has been found to be the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

The gas enters through cracks in homes/buildings/schools and exposes people to the radiation. And because our homes are typically shut up tight during cold winter days, any radon that enters your home will tend to linger much longer.



That is why January has been named **National Radon Action Month**, and the [Kane County Healthy Places Coalition](#), in conjunction with the Kane County Health

Department, recommends that now is a good time to test your home for the presence of radon. Testing is the only way to know if your home has a high level of radon gas. Regardless of the year your home was built, you may have high levels of radon gas.

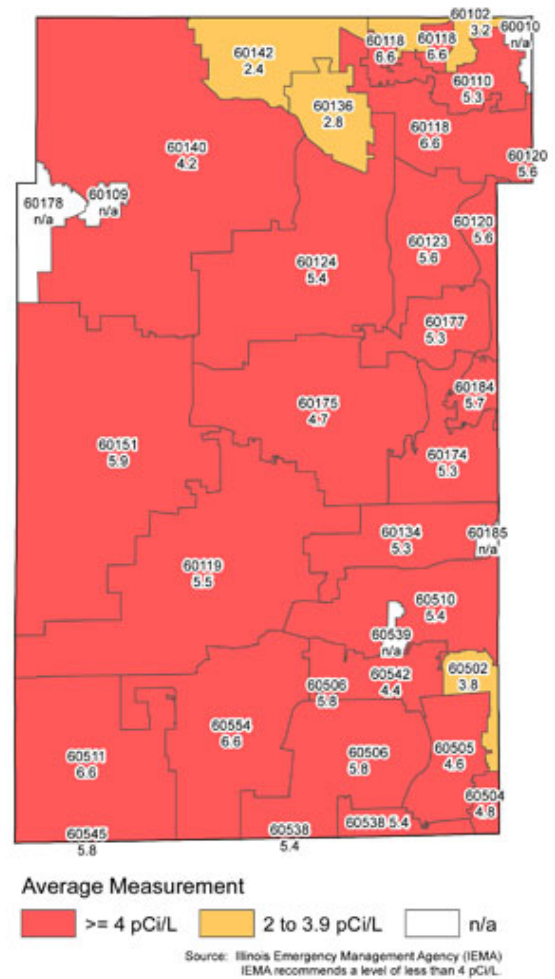
The United States Environmental Protection Agency reports that if a home or building tests at 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher, action should be taken to reduce the level of radon. The average indoor radon level in Kane County is 5.07 pCi/L, according to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). Residents can find the average radon level for homes in their ZIP code by clicking [HERE](#).

Not only is it important to test your home for dangerous levels of radon, it is just as important to take steps to lower the levels found to be too high.

With any level above 4, it is recommended that steps be taken to reduce the number through a procedure called mitigation. The cost to mitigate a home averages about \$1,200 and is done by certified professionals. You can find a list of professionals in your area by visiting the [IEMA website](#).

For general radon information about radon, please visit our website by clicking [HERE](#), or calling the Kane County Health Department at 630-444-3040.

Kane County Radon Levels by Zip Code



Just in time for the holidays, Health Department offers flu vaccine



You probably already know that the best way to protect yourself and your family from the flu is to get your annual flu shot. Can you think of a better holiday present than the gift of your health? And while you're at it, why not make sure the whole family gets their vaccinations?

While flu shots are available at most pharmacies, and from your personal physician, the Health Department is providing another option this season. We offer a flu vaccination clinic at the Aurora office, 1240 N. Highland Ave. Clinic hours are weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The vaccinations will be offered throughout the flu season while supplies of the vaccine last. The cost of the vaccine is \$25, payable by check or cash.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone six months of age and older be vaccinated against influenza, especially pregnant women, young children, people 65 years of age and older, and anyone with underlying health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or a weakened immune system. According to the CDC, flu seasons are unpredictable and can be severe. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000

people.

Want more? The Kane County Health Department provides a wealth of information about influenza on our website [HERE](#). You will find the weekly report that details flu-like illness activity in Kane County, a locator map for additional locations where you can receive the vaccine, educational materials and more.

While appointments for the clinic are encouraged, walk-ins are welcomed. **You can make an appointment or ask questions by calling the Health Department's Bee Wize, Immunize phone line at (866) 233-9493 or (630) 264-7665.**

Is your car prepared for the inevitable winter weather?

You may have prepared your home for winter weather; now it's time to prepare your car. You never know when you will encounter winter weather or an emergency road closure. Seasonal changes also mean changes to your emergency supply kit.

The [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](#) encourages you to update your vehicle's emergency kit with several items, including:

- A shovel
- Jumper cables
- A bag of sand or cat litter
- Warm clothes

Avoid many dangerous winter travel problems by planning ahead. Before you hit the road, have a mechanic check items on your vehicle, including:

- Antifreeze levels – ensure they are sufficient to avoid freezing
- Battery and ignition system – terminal should be clean
- Brakes – check for wear and fluid level
- Tires – make sure they have adequate tread



And remember, a simple gift idea is to provide your loved one(s) with emergency preparedness kits, for their home, work place or car. No one in our area should be without gear to battle a Northern Illinois winter. Some commercial companies sell ready-made kits.

At home, we should be prepared to have at least a three-day supply of food and water for each member of our household. It's best to keep your supplies in an easy-to-carry kit that you can use at home or take with you if you need to evacuate.

Taking just a few minutes to plan ahead can give you peace of mind, and that's what we all hope for during the holiday season.

For more information about Kane County's Public Health Emergency Response program, please visit our Web site [HERE](#).

You can visit the National Weather Service's website [HERE](#).



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Illinois**

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