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To: Polk County Media

From: Tonya Eichelt, Director/Health Officer Polk County, WI

As an individual or family, your health and the health of your loved ones is always a priority. Now is the time to take an important step to make sure that you and your loved ones live in a healthy environment.

Radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, radioactive gas that enters homes through the foundation. Many homes in Wisconsin have elevated levels of radon gas. The only way to know your radon level in your home is to test. If your home has a high level, there are simple ways to fix a radon problem that aren't too costly. Even very high levels can be reduced to acceptable levels.

Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in the lungs when you breathe. After further break down, these particles release small bursts of energy which can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer over the course of a lifetime. In fact, radon is the 2nd leading cause of lung cancer with over 21,000 radon related lung cancer deaths nationwide every year.

Children are more sensitive to radon because their lungs are smaller and their respiratory rates are twice as high. People with lung issues are also at greater risk because their lung tissue is already compromised. Not everyone exposed to elevated levels of radon will develop lung cancer and the amount of time between exposure and the onset of the disease may be many years.

- In recognition of National Radon Action Month, during January, the Polk County Health Department is offering short-term test kits for \$5.00 (\$8.00 by mail-send check to Polk County Health Dept., 100 Polk Co. Plaza, Ste. 180, Balsam Lake, WI 54810).

A radon informational booklet explains the dangers of radon gas along with testing and mitigation options. To view this booklet, visit www.polkcountyhealthdept.org.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Brian Hobbs at 715-485-8532.