



Pennington & Red Lake Counties Wellness Newsletter

January 2025

Radon Action Month

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States after cigarette smoke. The EPA and the Surgeon General's office estimate radon is responsible for more than 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the United States.

When you breathe in radon, radioactive particles from the decay of radon gas can get trapped in your lungs. It takes many years for lung cancer to develop. Most people don't have symptoms until lung cancer is advanced and at that point it is harder to treat. For these reasons, it is important to take steps to reduce radon exposure throughout your life to help prevent lung cancer.

Factors that increase your risk of getting lung cancer from radon include the following:

- High radon levels in any building that you regularly spend time in.
- High radon levels in the part of the home or building where you spend the most time (radon levels are often higher in basements and lower levels).
- Smoking cigarettes, currently or in the past.
- Burning wood, coal, or other substances that add particles to air.

The only way to know if you have unsafe levels of radon in your home or office is by testing. You can contact Pennington/Red Lake Public Health for a testing kit or purchase a test kit in a hardware store or online.

For more information visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/radon/index.html>

Whooping Cough (Pertussis)




Whooping cough is showing up more than usual this winter. It starts out just like a cold and is highly contagious, but 1-2 weeks later people can experience rapid, violent and uncontrolled coughing fits.

Whooping cough is caused by a bacteria and causes the airway to swell, which is often why the cough makes a high-pitched “whoop” sound. There is a test and treatment, but it is hard to determine because its so similar to a virus. The good news is that there is a vaccine for it. It's the 'P' in the DTaP/Tdap vaccine. This is a routine vaccine and should be kept up to date. People need boosters to keep immunity up, so ask your health care provider if you are up to date. Vaccination is especially important if you are around babies, very young babies are not fully immunized and are more susceptible to serious illness and hospitalization.

People of all ages need WHOOPING COUGH VACCINES



DTaP for young children	Tdap for preteens	Tdap for pregnant women	Tdap for adults
✓ 2, 4, and 6 months ✓ 15 through 18 months ✓ 4 through 6 years	✓ 11 through 12 years	✓ During the 27-36th week of each pregnancy	✓ Anytime for those who have never received it

www.cdc.gov/whoopingcough 

Parenting Tips: Bullying

As a parent, you want to protect your children and you want to teach them how to stick up for themselves and for what is right. Help your child learn how to prevent bullying by talking to them about the issue and encouraging them to speak up.

Explain to your children what bullying is, and that it is NEVER acceptable. Express your concern and make it clear you will listen and you want to help.

Teach your child what to do when they see or are a victim of bullying. Talk to them about which adults they can turn to and what to say when asking for help.

No parent wants to believe their child is bullying but if you suspect it, either because it has been brought to your attention or just because you have a concern that it might be happening you have a responsibility to take action.

Working closely with the school to resolve the situation is important. It may be that your child was bullied and is now repeating the behavior.

SOME INDICATORS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE BULLYING OTHERS ARE:

- Becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- Gets sent to the principal's office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions
- Has friends who bully others
- Needs to win or be best at everything

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Talk with your child. Ask for their account of the situation. Be objective and listen carefully. Calmly explain what your child is accused of and ask for an explanation of the incident and their role.
 - Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously. Calmly let them know that you will not tolerate this behavior. Help your child learn that bullying hurts everyone involved.
 - Develop clear and consistent rules for your child's behavior. Praise your child when they follow the rules. Decide on fair consequences and follow through if your child breaks the rules.
 - Spend more time with your child. Carefully supervise and monitor their activities, including when they are online or texting.
 - Be aware of who your child's friends are. Find out how they spend their free time.
 - Build on your child's talents and positive attributes. Encourage him or her to get involved in social activities.
 - Work with your child's school to ensure the bullying does not happen again. Ask the school to keep you informed. Develop strategies together to address bullying. Work together to send clear messages to your child that the bullying must stop.
 - Talk with a school counselor or health professional. They may be able to provide your child with additional help.
- Parents need to remember that children who bully are at high risk for engaging in risky or even criminal behaviors, and it is very important in a bullying situation for the parents to act immediately.



Enjoying Cold Weather Safely

Winter isn't a time to just stay indoors and wait for spring. There's a whole wonderland of sports out there for the entire family and someone has to shovel the snow, right? Follow these tips to keep safe outdoors in cold weather.

When you go outside in the cold, stay safe – and warm. Kids should dress warmly in layers of clothes. Layers keep the warmth in. Plus, if the top layer gets wet from snow or freezing rain, they can peel off some clothes down to a dry layer. Use more layers the colder it is outside.

- Wool is often warmer than cotton.
- Waterproof pants and jackets can help keep kids dry.
- A hat will help kids keep warm.
- Protect your kids' faces with sunscreen. Snow can reflect most of the sun's ultraviolet rays, making sunburn in the snow a real risk.
- Wear gloves or mittens, socks, and warm boots to help avoid frostbite.

More information can be found at <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/winter-safety.html>

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www.pennredlakepublichealth.com

