

Health Matters



from the Kane County Health Department

— December 21, 2017 —

Trending Matters:

Flu shots offered by Health Department

Aurora office,
1240 N. Highland Ave.
Clinic hours: 9 AM to 4 PM,
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
and Friday, while vaccine supply
lasts. Cost: \$23.87, payable by
check or cash.
Call 630-208-3801 for more
information.

The best way to protect yourself
and your family from the flu this
season is to get a flu shot. Call
630-208-3801 for more
information.

[CLICK](#) for info about flu shots

Here are some quick tips on how to prevent the spread of norovirus:

- Wash your hands carefully with soap and water— especially after using the toilet and changing diapers, and always before eating, preparing, or handling food
- Rinse fruits & vegetables
- Cook shellfish thoroughly

Practice proper hand hygiene



It was just 11 months ago that a local high school cancelled classes when about one-third of its students reported being ill with gastrointestinal symptoms. Laboratory results eventually confirmed that the “bug” that affected so many was norovirus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), norovirus is most common from November through April, typically those colder months.

Norovirus can spread quickly in closed places like daycare centers, nursing homes, schools, and cruise ships. In fact, norovirus is the leading cause of illness and outbreaks from contaminated food in the United States.

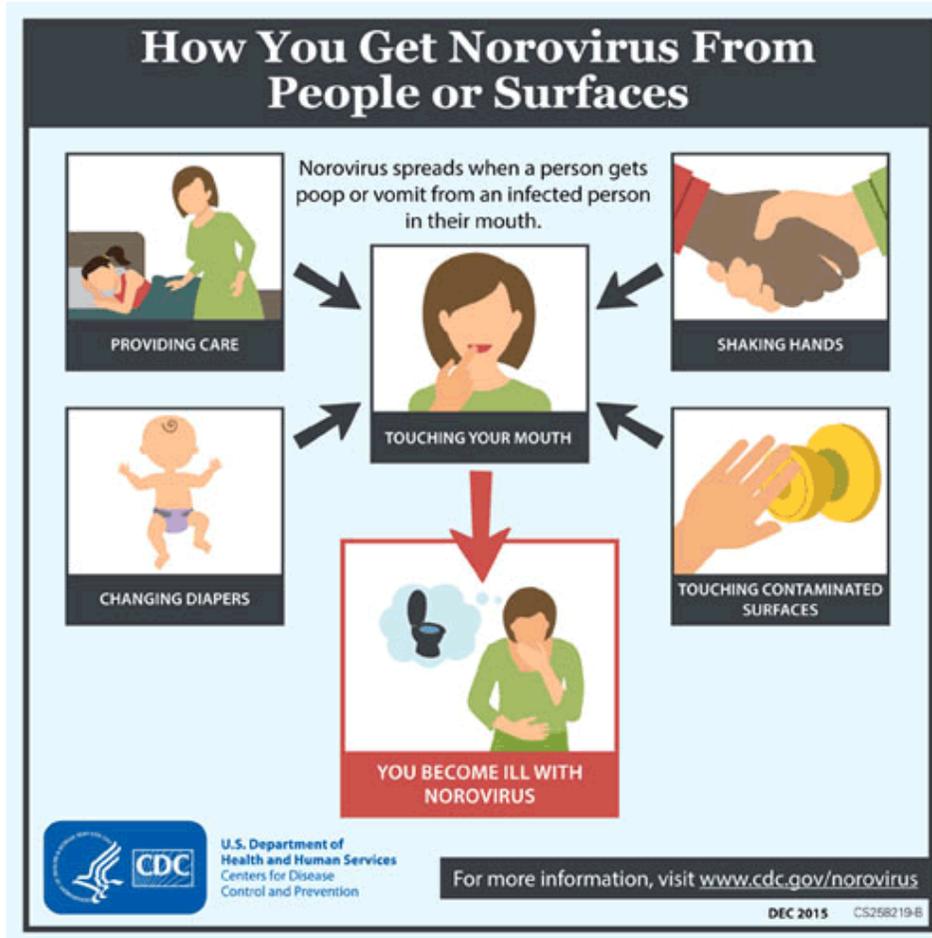
Norovirus is a very contagious virus that can infect anyone. You can get it from an infected person, contaminated food or water, or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus causes your stomach or intestines or both to get inflamed. This leads you to have stomach pain, nausea, and diarrhea and to throw up. These symptoms can be serious for some people, especially young children and older adults.

To view a short video that explains what norovirus is, how it is spread, groups that are at high risk for severe disease and how you can protect yourself and loved ones from getting it, please

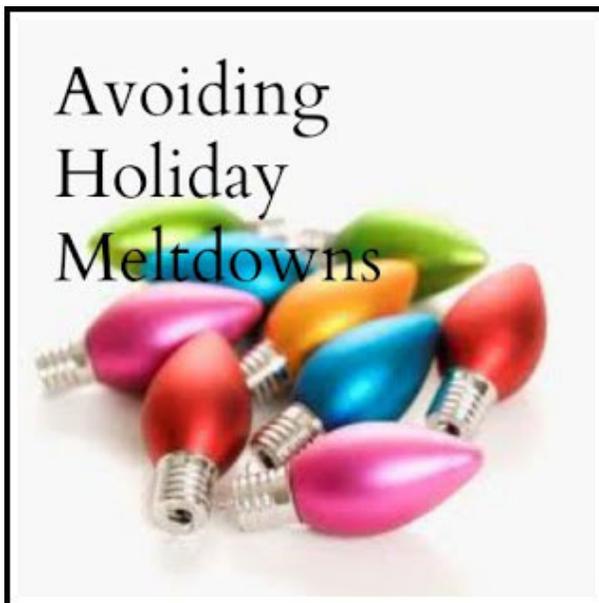
- Clean surfaces & wash laundry
- When you're sick, don't prepare food or care for others

click [HERE](#).

More information on norovirus is available by visiting our website by clicking [HERE](#).



How to cope with holiday stress



We feel that the holiday season is supposed to be a time full of joy, parties and gatherings with friends and families. But then the holiday season bombards us with unrealistic expectations. And many of us feel overwhelmed when our "to-do" list goes on forever!

According to the Mayo Clinic, while some people experience temporary periods of depression like the "holiday blues" or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), many of us live with mental illness every day. The holidays are especially difficult when our own feelings of sadness, loneliness, depression and anxiety are the opposite of the "Hallmark" images we see all around us. Behavioral Health has been identified as one of the top health priorities in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

You can learn more about the CHIP by visiting the Kane Health Counts site by clicking [HERE](#). Additional information is from the Kane County Behavioral Health Council's website [HERE](#).

Follow some simple tips
to cope with holiday stress:

- ◆ *Acknowledge your feelings.*
- ◆ *Reach out.*
- ◆ *Be realistic.*
- ◆ *Set aside differences.*
- ◆ *Stick to a budget.*
- ◆ *Plan ahead.*
- ◆ *Learn to say no.*
- ◆ *Don't abandon healthy habits.*
- ◆ *Take a breather.*
- ◆ *Seek professional help
if you need it.*



Raising awareness of the dangers of 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 and 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](#)



The U.S. 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](#).

Coalition, in conjunction with the Kane County Health Department, recommend that now is a good time to test your home for the presence of radon. Regardless of the year your home was built, you may have high levels of radon gas.

More information about radon is available on our website [HERE](#).

Testing is easy and inexpensive.

It's the only way to know that radon is in your home.



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Kane County,
Illinois**

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There is also a **Sign Up Form** on the page, for those who would like to be added to our email list to receive future Health Matters newsletters.