Have a very safe holiday season and a happy, healthy new year!

--from the faculty and staff at Cooperative Extension
Free Radon Test Kits at Radon Awareness Presentations in December

Clark County Cooperative Extension encourages all residents to test their homes for radon and are offering Radon Awareness presentations in December. At the end of the presentation, attendees will receive a free radon test kit. December dates are:

- Dec. 8, 2012  12:00 p.m., West Las Vegas Library  951 Lake Mead Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89106
- Dec. 15, 2012  11:00 a.m., Whitney Library  5175 E. Tropicana Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89122
- Dec. 17, 2012  2:00 p.m., Clark County Library  1401 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89119

Most people associate lung cancer with smoking, but the leading cause of lung cancer for nonsmokers is radon. Although smokers have a higher risk of radon-induced lung cancer than nonsmokers, about 21,000 people die each year in the U.S. of lung cancer caused by indoor radon exposure. The radon health risk is highly preventable, yet few people know about the radon risk or have their homes tested for it.

Radon is a radioactive gas. It comes from the natural decay of uranium in soil and enters homes through foundation cracks, openings and some of the porous materials used to construct foundations and floors of homes. It is an odorless, colorless, invisible gas that can reach harmful levels when trapped indoors. Radon can enter any home, old or new. Two neighboring homes can have very different radon levels. The only way to know what the radon levels are inside your home is to measure them.

"Winter is the ideal time to test your home for radon," said Laura Au-Yeung, the Southern Area Radon Program Coordinator, "as most of us keep our homes closed up during cold weather." If you are ready to test your home for radon, attend this short presentation and pick up your free, short-term test kit.

For your first test, it is best to use the short-term test kit which remains in your home from two to four days. It contains activated charcoal which adsorbs radon and provides extremely accurate results. If you do find high levels of radon in your home, the EPA recommends a follow-up test, as radon levels fluctuate naturally. Depending upon the result of the screening test, a long-term test may be recommended.

If you do have elevated levels of radon in your home, most problems can be fixed for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs. It is best to have the problems addressed by a qualified professional. For more information, call Au-Yeung at 702-257-5550 or e-mail her at au-yeungl@unce.unr.edu or visit the Radon website at www.RadonNV.com.
The Community Connection will have a new look in 2013. Beginning with the January issue, look for more information on events, classes, workshops, etc.

Clark County Cooperative Extension

January–National Radon Awareness Month

Clark County Cooperative Extension encourages all residents in Nevada to test their homes for radon and is offering Radon Awareness presentations in January. At the end of the presentations, attendees will receive a free radon test kit.

January dates are:
- Jan. 5, 2:00 p.m., Clark County Library, 1401 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, NV 89119
- Jan. 8, 11:00 a.m., Spring Valley Library, 4280 S. Jones Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89103
- Jan. 15, 4:00 p.m. Sunrise Library, 5400 Harris Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89110
- Jan. 19, 10:30 a.m., Windmill Library, 7060 W. Windmill Lane, Las Vegas, NV 89113

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South Valley Rose Society Meeting

Cooperative Extension and the South Valley Rose Society are collaborating and offering educational meetings. Free and open to the public, the meeting topic and date for January is:

January 24, Good Bugs/Bad Bugs—Larry Kaplan, SVRS Yearbook Editor

What insects are beneficial to roses? How to attract them? Where can you buy them? What insects cause problems and how to determine if your roses have been attacked? What do you look for and how to get rid of them, using organic or inorganic products?

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Frequently asked questions…and answers
By Mary Wilson, Registered Dietitian

Q. Why is pork a "red" meat? I thought it was "the other white meat."

A. Myoglobin, a protein, is responsible for the majority of the red color. According to USDA, red meat is defined by the amount of myoglobin held in the muscle tissue. Pork is classified a “red” meat because it contains more myoglobin than chicken or fish. When fresh pork is cooked, it becomes lighter in color, but it is still a red meat. Pork is classified as “livestock” along with veal, lamb and beef. All livestock are considered “red meat.” For healthier eating, select lean cuts of red meat: beef – round, chuck, sirloin or tenderloin, and extra lean ground beef; pork – tenderloin, loin chops, and leg.

Q. One of my callers told me that lately her toddler refuses to eat meat and wanted to know alternatives she can offer him to provide protein in his diet.

A. Toddlers, pre-schoolers and even school-age children often go through no-meat phases. Meats are more difficult to chew, as they contain gristle, and lose flavor during the chewing process. Sometimes your child may avoid a food because it is too much trouble to eat. If your child refuses to eat meats, here are some alternate choices:

- Cheese is a staple food in the diet of many children, and can be offered in many forms – preferably low-fat – such as in sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, nachos, quesadillas, or as a sauce on vegetables. Cottage cheese can be eaten plain or with fruit, or melted on English muffin halves with a touch of cinnamon or spaghetti sauce.
- Eggs, cooked dried beans and tofu are good replacements for meat as well. Nuts and spreads like peanut butter provide a good source of protein but be cautious offering nuts to very young children as they can cause choking.
- Fatty fish such as salmon and albacore tuna are easy to chew and an excellent source of protein and healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Encourage children to eat 2-3 ounces of fatty fish twice per week.
- Use yogurt as a healthy snack food or as part of the main meal as the protein source.
- Encourage your child to drink milk. Milk is an excellent source of protein as well as calcium.
- Offer soft meats that are easy to chew. Cooked ground beef (drained and rinsed to reduce the fat content) requires much less chewing than other pieces of meat. Ground meat on pizza or in spaghetti sauce and chicken or tuna salad is easy to chew as well as easy to prepare.