



January 24, 2026

We're buckling down for a snowy weekend and frigid temps here in Union County. We've got helpful tips to stay safe and warm in this issue, as well as:

- A respiratory update in Union County
- The Stay Active 5k
- January is Radon Action Month
- And Empty Bowls

Respiratory Illnesses Update

We have certainly seen an increase in respiratory illness in the past few weeks.

Wastewater monitoring found high levels of flu viral fragments the week of Jan. 05 and a high level of SARS CoV-2 the week of Jan. 12. Our Health Center is reporting an increase in Pediatric RSV illness and several schools are experiencing high levels of influenza-like illness, our catch-all term for illness that has several of the characteristic symptoms (fever, cough, runny nose, fatigue, etc.). According to the Ohio Respiratory Activity Dashboard, 6 hospitalizations were reported among Union County residents the week ending January 17, 2026 (1-RSV, 1-flu, 4-COVID)

Stay Active 5k

Keep that New Year's Resolution for a healthy 2026 going and set a goal to participate in StayActive 5K on March 14, 2026!

Take advantage of the lowest registration prices and register TODAY!!

Proceeds from this event benefit programs tackling food insecurity for youth in Union County!

[LEARN MORE](#)



Radon

January is Radon Action Month. Radon is an odorless, colorless gas that is naturally occurring in soil across the US. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer, only behind smoking. Due to the glacier formations we had here in central Ohio, Union County soil has potential for higher concentrations of radon gas. It is recommended that every homeowner test their house for radon gas once every two to five years. The good news: the Ohio Department of Health offers free test kits. Just order a kit online, and it'll be mailed to your home. Click here to order your free test kit: <https://ohio.radon.com/>.

According to the EPA, there is no safe level of radon in your home. However, the EPA recommends a radon mitigation system for homes with a reading over 4pCi/L. Learn more at: <https://www.epa.gov/radon>



Union County Empty Bowls Project

In Ohio, 1 in 5 children do not know when they will eat next.

You can make an impact and demonstrate your commitment to solving hunger.

Put simply, hunger's toll can be life-altering. Food insecurity is associated with 40 serious health conditions in children, adults, and seniors, as well as adverse social outcomes. Lack of access to food is considered a critical public health issue. Key drivers of food insecurity include unemployment, poverty, and income shocks. The food insecurity rate in Ohio hovers around 14.1%. The Mid-Ohio Food Bank reports 119,000 (19.7%) children in District 12 (most in central Ohio) are food insecure.

Join us for the Union County Empty Bowls Project, where your commitment to fighting hunger is symbolized by a hand-glazed stoneware bowl and a seat at our table, where you can savor chef-prepared gourmet soup, homemade bread, and dessert. The primary goal of Empty Bowls is to raise funds for local food charities and to create awareness about poverty and hunger. The artisan stoneware bowls are yours to keep!

For more information, go to: <https://impact60.org/homepage/empty-bowls-project/>

Winter Weather Tips

In Your Car



At Home

- Staying warm with a space heater? Make sure it has an auto shut-off in case it tips over. Check on family/friends today #WinterReady
- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from a fireplace, wood stove, or space heater. #WinterReady
- Watch this short video from @usfa to learn how to prevent portable heater fires in your home this winter: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AMQ1ASnmNU>
- If you're running a portable generator, you need to have a working carbon monoxide alarm in your home. #WinterReady
- #WinterReady Tip: NEVER use a generator, camp stove, charcoal grill, gasoline or propane heater indoors.
- NEVER heat a home by using the stovetop or oven. It increases the risk of burns, fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. #WinterReady.
- Keep generators outside at least 20 feet away from doors, windows, and vents to avoid accidental CO poisoning. #WinterReady

And Remember to Walk Like a Penguin

- When you're going to be outside, there are several steps that you can take to avoid sliding or falling during the slippery winter months:
- Pay attention and be aware of the surfaces around you and ahead of you.
- Choose winter shoes with rubber soles to maintain traction, or winterize your shoes and boots with removable crampons.
- Plan ahead, avoid rushing, and give yourself plenty of time to get where you are going.
- Wear gloves to keep your hands warm and out of your pockets to provide better stability.
- Don't get distracted by trying to text or talk on a cell phone while walking in dangerous, icy conditions.
- Be sure to keep your driveways and walkways cleared, shoveled and treated with ice melt or kitty litter.



— UNION COUNTY —
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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