HEALTH IN THE HEARTLAND Friday, January 26, 2018 4 **Hi Neighbor! Newspapers**

RICE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Both locations have recently added a patient portal which provides patients easy and private access to their medical information whenever and wherever there is internet access. Patients can gain access

to health information and receive periodic updates and reminders from their medical provider.

"The portal provides one more option for patients to take control of their personal wellness;

putting their medical information at their fingertips 24/7." Stover added.

To schedule an appointment with a physician or to gain access to your personal health information and become an active participant in your healthcare, visit www.ricecountyhospi-

tal.com or contact the clinic nearest you: Lyons Medical Center 620-257-5124 or Sterling Medical Center 620-278-2123.

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How humidity can make homes more comfotable

Central heating and cooling systems have revolutionized the way homeowners make their homes comfortable. But many people find that heating and cooling systems have a tendency to make areas in their homes more dry than they would be if athe windows were open.

Without adequate indoor humidity, static electricity proliferates, and living environments may not be as pleasant as they could be. According to Lennox, makers of heating and cooling components, dry air can compromise peoples' respiratory systems. When membranes in the nose and throat dry out, they cannot capture dirt, viruses and bacteria, potentially resulting in illness. Dry air can cause itchy, flaky skin as well as irritation in the nose,

leading to nosebleeds.

Dry air in a home also can affect the structure of a home. Dry air will pull moisture from wherever it can be sourced, including wood structures in a home. This may cause walls and door jambs to shift and floors to creak. Even wood furniture can bend and crack if indoor conditions are especially dry.

Homeowners can remedy dry air in various ways. Some methods are relatively simple, while others may require substantial financial investments and even some renovation.

Humidifiers Humidifiers come as whole-house central units or portable devices. Portable units can be moved from room to room depending on where moisture is needed the most. These humidifiers hold a predetermined volume of water and mist it into the air when the unit is on.

Central humidifiers work with the home's HVAC system. They are hard-wired and plugged into the system. Water vapor is introduced into the air that will be forced through vents throughout the house. These systems work on the whole house at once, making them quite efficient.

Many experts advise homeowners to keep their indoor home humidity between 40 and 60 percent for ultimate comfort. Investing in a hygrometer to measure relative humidity will help homeowners keep humidity at a level that produces a pleasant and comfortable environment.

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Services

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DOT physicals Immunizations EKG



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Carbon monoxide remediation

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly. Because carbon monoxide is found in the fumes produced when fuel is burned, it is present in and around homes. As a result, homeowners should be aware of carbon monoxide and make every effort to detect its presence.

CO forms most readily when there is insufficient oxygen to complete combustion and produce carbon dioxide. Hot water closets, furnaces in crawlspaces, heating appliances in attics, and other contained areas are common areas where CO can form. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that thousands of people visit emergency rooms and are hospitalized because of CO poisoning every year. While CO is a risk for just about anyone, infants, the elderly, those with breathing problems or chronic heart disease, and people with anemia are most likely to get sick from CO. CO has earned the moniker "the silent killer" because it cannot be identified without the presence of a carbon monoxide detector. If a person believes he or she is smelling carbon monoxide, that person is probably mistaking the odor for other combustion byproducts that the human nose can sense. CO is a byproduct of vehicle exhaust, boat engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, furnaces, and fireplaces. CO is produced anytime something is burning. That is why it is essential that products designed to be used outdoors are used exclusively outside, and that indoor appliances are properly vented to the outdoors. CO can build up indoors and poison people and pets who breathe it in. Some people may not recognize that CO is problematic in a home until multiple residents start complaining of similar symptoms. Common CO poisoning symp-

toms include nausea and vomiting, dizziness, chest pain, confusion, headache, and other flu-like symptoms, advises the consumer advocacy group Carbon Monoxide Kills. Those with repeated exposure to high levels of CO may eventually develop cerebral edema, which is a swelling of the brain. CO can compress brain cells and destroy them, leading to neurological issues and death. CO poisoning is actually the result of the head

Installing or replacing carbon monoxide detectors is an easy improvement that can help save lives.











Patient counseling

and heart not receiving sufficient oxygen.

CO detectors can save lives and should be installed in all homes and apartments. The National Fire Protection Association says CO detectors "shall be centrally located outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms." Individuals should follow the manufacturer instructions regarding where on the wall or ceiling the CO detectors should be mounted. As an added safety precaution, CO detectors should be placed on every floor of the home.

Gas sensors in CO alarms have limited life spans, so they should be replaced generally every five to six years, because calibrating and testing for CO is more difficult than simply replacing the alarms.

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