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RADON FACTS

Breathing radon in your home can cause lung cancer

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil and water that can build up to dangerous levels inside any home; this means new and old homes, well sealed and drafty homes, and homes with or without a basement. Radon gas is odorless and invisible and the only way to know if your home has a radon problem is to test for it.

Breathing radon can increase your risk of lung cancer. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among people who do not smoke. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer for people who do. EPA estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 deaths from lung cancer each year in the U.S. If you smoke and your home has a high radon level, your risk of lung cancer can increase even more.

Radon has been found in every state

Homes with high levels of radon have been found in every state. In fact, radon levels can vary greatly from home to home - even levels next door can be very different.

Radon is measured in picocuries per liter of air (pCi/L), a measurement of radioactivity. In the United States, the average indoor radon level is about 1.3 pCi/L. The average outdoor level is about 0.4 pCi/L. The U.S. Surgeon General and EPA recommend fixing homes with radon levels at or above 4 pCi/L. EPA also recommends that people think about fixing their homes for radon levels between 2 pCi/L and 4 pCi/L.

In Minnesota, 2 in 5 homes have radon levels that pose a significant health risk and the average radon level is more than three times the national average. Any home may have a radon problem.

You should test for radon

Testing your house for radon is easy. If your house has a radon problem, it can be fixed. Fixing a radon problem reduces the risk of lung cancer for you and your family.

A simple test will tell you if your home has a high radon level. Most radon tests last between 2 and 7 days. It's as easy as opening a package, and putting the test kit in the right place. After sending the test kit back to the address in the package, the company will send your radon test results in about 2 weeks.

Many local home improvement or hardware stores sell test kits. Test kits can be ordered online too. Sometimes you can get a test kit from your state radon office. You also can hire a qualified tester to do a radon test for you. Your state radon program may keep a list of these professionals.



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For more information about radon testing call 1-800-SOS-RADON (1-800-767-7236) or visit www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html.

You can fix a radon problem

Help is available to fix a radon problem. You can call your state radon office to find qualified radon mitigators in your area. Also local companies with radon mitigators are in the phone book or online. The cost to reduce radon depends on how your home was built and how you use it. Most homes can be fixed for about the same cost as other common home repairs.

New homes can be built with radon-resistant features

Building new homes with simple and cost-effective radon-resistant features can reduce radon entry. Contact your builder or visit www.epa.gov/radon/rrnc/index.html for more information.

Every home should be tested before, or soon after, you move in. Even homes built with radon-resistant construction features should be tested. If high radon levels are found, it is easier and costs less to reduce radon levels in homes that are built radon-resistant.

For more information on radon in Minnesota homes, visit the Minnesota Department of Health at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/index.html and for radon testing, see www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/indoorair/radon/radontestresults.html.

Acknowledgments:

Environmental Protection Agency
Minnesota Department of Health



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