



Important Facts About Radon

What is radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas created by the breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. As radon forms, it escapes into the air. Outdoors, the amount of radon we breathe is harmless. However, the level of radon indoors can become concentrated enough to be a health hazard.

Is it dangerous?

Radon is a major cause of lung cancer. In fact, the U.S. Surgeon General has warned that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates deaths from lung cancer due to radon exposure at 21,000 per year. Only smoking causes more lung cancer deaths. And for smokers, exposure to high levels of radon greatly increases the likelihood of lung cancer.

Where is radon found?

A radon problem can exist in any style or age of home. Elevated radon levels have been found in buildings in every state of the US. The rate of homes in the US with high radon levels is estimated to be nearly one out of fifteen.

How does radon get into a building?

Air pressure inside a building is usually lower than the pressure of the soil under and around its foundation. The difference in pressure forces gases, including radon, from the soil into the interior of the building. Although much less common, radon can also come from well water or building materials.

Is it in my house?

Since radon is odorless and invisible, it can only be detected and measured by equipment designed for that purpose. The Environmental Protection Agency, the American Lung Association, the National Safety Council and the Surgeon General all recommend every home below the third-floor level be tested for radon. Radon measurement involves leaving an apparatus undisturbed in the house for a period of several days. During that time, occupants keep windows and doors closed except to enter and leave the house. From air samples taken by the apparatus, the concentration of radon can be determined. The test is inexpensive and can be done by a professional inspector or by the homeowner.

What level of radon is unsafe?

The EPA reports, "there is no known safe level of radon," but recommends action definitely be taken to reduce radon if the level in a home measures 4 picoCuries per liter of air or higher. (Outdoor air generally measures about .4 pCi/L.)

Can homes with unsafe radon levels be made safer?

Yes, homes can be equipped with devices to direct radon outside, where it safely dissipates in the atmosphere. Remediation may be as simple as increasing ventilation of the crawlspace or may involve more complicated modifications. Generally, any but the simplest methods should be done by a qualified radon mitigation contractor. The cost depends on the method used and the size and design of the home. The EPA estimates the range of prices at \$800 to \$2500, and the average cost at \$1200. In other words, the cost is comparable to the price of many home appliances, such as a refrigerator-freezer or a large- screen TV—and radon mitigation saves lives.

Where can I get further information on radon?

<http://www.epa.gov/radon/>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/radon.html>

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www.hometeamgeorgia.com*