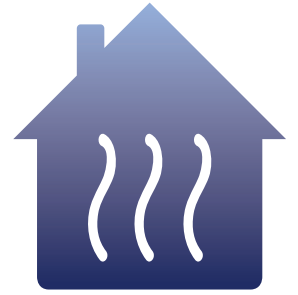




Why you might consider testing your home for radon gas at this time of year



Submitted by Dorothy Griffith, RN, Certified Respiratory Educator

What is radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally when the uranium in soil and rock breaks down. It is invisible, odourless and tasteless. When radon is released from the ground into the outdoor air, it is diluted and is not a concern. However, in enclosed spaces, like homes, it can sometimes accumulate to high levels, which can be a risk to the health of you and your family.

What are the health effects of radon?

Radon gas breaks down or decays to form radioactive elements that can be inhaled into the lungs. In the lungs, decay continues, creating radioactive particles that release small bursts of energy. This energy is absorbed by nearby lung tissue, damaging the lung cells. When cells are damaged, they have the potential to result in cancer when they reproduce.

Exposure to high levels of radon in indoor air results in an increased risk of developing lung cancer. The risk of cancer depends on the level of radon and how long a person is exposed to those levels.

Exposure to radon and tobacco use together can significantly increase your risk of lung cancer. For example, if you are a lifelong smoker your risk of getting lung cancer is 1 in 10. If you add long term exposure to a high level of radon, your risk becomes 1 in 3. On the other hand, if you are a non-smoker, your lifetime lung cancer risk at the same high radon level is 1 in 20.

How can radon get into my home?

The air pressure inside your home is usually lower than in the soil surrounding the foundation. This difference in pressure draws air and other gases, including radon, from the soil into your home.

Radon can enter a home any place it finds an opening where the house contacts the soil: cracks in foundation

walls and in floor slabs, construction joints, gaps around service pipes, support posts, window casements, floor drains, sumps or cavities inside walls.

Where can I get a radon test kit?

For \$65.00, you can buy a Radon kit from The Lung Association of Saskatchewan. The purchase price also includes data analysis by the Saskatchewan Research Council. The kits can be ordered online or by calling the Lung Association, Saskatchewan at 306-343-9511 or 1-888-566-LUNG. Radon tests will be shipped directly to you.


If you want to hire a contractor, Health Canada recommends that the contractor be certified as a radon mitigation professional from an accredited organization.

Health Canada recognizes the Canadian certification program, Canadian National Radon Proficiency Program (C-NRPP), www.c-nrpp.ca, 1-855-722-6777.

How much will it cost to reduce the level of radon in my home?

The cost for radon reduction depends on the size and design of a home and the work that is needed. These costs typically range from \$500 to \$3000.

Where can I learn more?

Visit [Radon](#) or call 1-866-225-0709, TTY 1-800-465-7735 for more information on radon. 

Reprinted in part from:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/reports-publications/radiation/radon-your-home-lhealth-canada-2009.html>

Source: Saskatoon Community Clinic Focus newsletter, Winter 2018.