

Facts about Radon



What is Radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in soils, rock, and water throughout the United States. Most of the public's exposure to natural radiation comes from radon, which can accumulate in homes – particularly those homes that have their own well water rather than municipal water. When the water is agitated, as with showering or washing the dishes, radon escapes into the air and enters the home through cracks in the foundation floor or walls, through hollow-brick walls, and through openings around floor drains, pipes and sump pumps. Once the radon is inside the home, residents ingest the harmful substance, which in extreme cases can cause lung cancer.

How do I know if there is radon in my home?

You cannot see, feel, smell or taste radon. Testing your home is the only way to safely know if you and your family are at risk of radon poisoning. The EPA recommends testing for radon in all rooms below the third floor.

Radon testing is inexpensive and easy – it should only take a few minutes. Various low-cost, do-it-yourself test kits are available at your local hardware store or you can hire a trained contractor to do the testing for you.

How can I fix my home if it has elevated levels of radon?

Sealing cracks and other openings in the foundation is a basic part of most approaches to radon reduction. However, by itself, sealing has not shown to lower radon levels significantly or consistently. In most cases, venting systems with pipes and fans are used to more effectively reduce radon.

How do I choose a radon reduction contractor?

Most county health departments can provide a list of certified radon mitigators in your area. Most homes can be fixed for roughly the same cost as other common home repairs. The average cost is about \$1,200, but actual costs can range from \$500 to \$2,500, depending on your home's construction and the strength of the radon source.