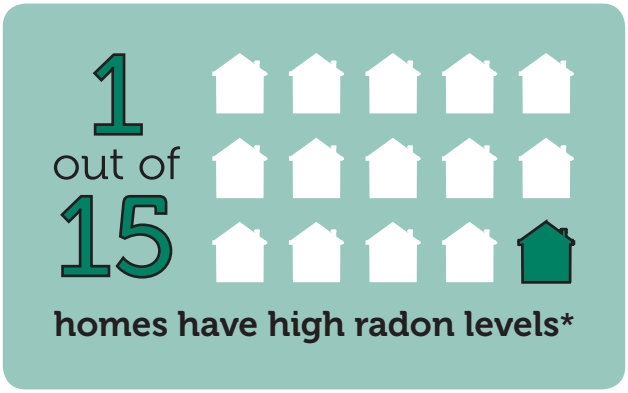
Test Your Home for Radon

Testing is easy and low-cost — and it could save your life.

You can't see radon gas. You can't smell it. But it's dangerous. Breathing in high levels of radon can raise your risk of lung cancer.

Testing your home is the only way to find out if you have a radon problem.
If you do, then you can fix it.



Why is radon dangerous?

Radon comes naturally from rocks and dirt in the ground. There's always some radon in the air around us. The problem is when radon gas from underneath a home leaks in through cracks or gaps. Too much of it can build up inside.

When you breathe in radon gas, the radioactive particles can get trapped in your lungs. Over time, they can cause lung cancer. The risks from radon depend on two things:

- **How much:** High radon levels are more dangerous.
- **How long:** The more contact you have with radon gas, the greater your risk.

In the United States, radon is the #2 cause of lung cancer after smoking and it is estimated to cause over 20,000 deaths each year.

Smoking makes radon even more dangerous.

Radon and tobacco smoke from cigarettes (and cigars and pipes) can damage your lungs. When they're combined, smoking and radon are more dangerous than either one on its own.

Smokers who live in homes with high radon levels have a **risk of lung cancer that's 10 times higher** than nonsmokers who live in homes with high radon levels.

Any home can have a radon problem.

High radon levels can be a risk anywhere in any state. Both old homes and new homes can have radon problems. So can homes with basements and homes without them. And 2 houses right next-door to each other could have very different radon levels.

That's why it's so important for **every home** to get tested.

*Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

National Center for Environmental Health
Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects

Test Your Home

The good news is that testing your home for radon is easy. You can do it yourself or hire someone to do it for you.

- **Get a radon test kit.** You can get an affordable kit from a hardware store. Or you can order one by calling 1-800-SOS-RADON (1-800-767-7236) or going to the National Radon Program Services website (http://sosradon.org/test-kits).
- **Set up the testing device to check the air for radon.** Depending on the type of test, it may take just a few days or many months to finish the test.
- **Send the device to a lab** and wait for the results.

If your test results show a radon level of **4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher**, test your home again. If the second test is also high, you need to fix the problem.



If your water comes from a well, you need to test it for radon too. Sometimes, well water can carry radon gas into the home.

If You Have High Radon Levels, Take Action

Finding out that your home has high radon levels can be scary. But you can take steps to make your home safer. Here's what you need to do:

- **Contact your state radon office** to get the name of a local expert who can give advice. You can fix some radon problems with simple low- or no-cost solutions. For bigger radon problems, you need a specialist — called a mitigation contractor — to fix your home.
- **If needed, repair your home.** Mitigation contractors can help by sealing cracks where radon gets in. They can also put in special pipes that help suck radon from under your home, so it goes outside instead of inside.

Radon in your home can be a serious health risk — but it's a problem you can fix. **If you haven't tested your home for radon, get a test kit now.**

Learn More About Radon: Visit www.cdc.gov/radon