

RADON INFORMATION

What is Radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that is colourless, odourless, and radioactive. It is formed as uranium breaks down in soil and rocks. When radon gas is released from the ground into outdoor air, it quickly dilutes, and is not harmful. In indoor settings, radon can accumulate to high levels and become a health concern. Radon levels vary by location and building design. Every home and workplace are different and the only way to know if you are at risk from radon, is by testing.

Certain areas are more at risk for high indoor radon levels. For a link to the BC Radon Map, visit bclung.ca/radon. Even in areas on the map with a lower risk, you could still have high radon in your home. It is recommended that all homes be tested as it is the only way to be sure you are not at risk.

Radon Reduction

If the radon level in your home is high, it can be fixed. A radon mitigation system can be installed in less than a day and in most homes will reduce the radon level by more than 80-90%. A pipe is installed through the foundation and connected to an outside wall or up through to the roof line. A small fan is attached which draws the radon from below the house to the outside before it can enter your home. For more information visit Canada.ca/radon.

If your testing reveals high radon levels, opening windows will dilute the air and reduce accumulation temporarily, until a radon mitigation professional can be hired to install a reduction system.

Subsidies

Subsidies for radon mitigation may be available. Information can be found at <https://www.lung.ca/lungs-matter-radon-mitigation-support>.

Why test for it?

Breathing radon over time, at any level but especially at high levels, increases your risk of lung cancer. Radon exposure is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. Over 3000 Canadians die of radon-induced lung cancer annually, that is more than 8 people a day. Testing is the first step in prevention. The longer you are exposed to high levels of radon, the greater the risk.

How to test for radon

Testing for radon gas is easy. Radon test kits can be purchased online or you can hire a measurement professional to do the test for you. Health Canada and BC Lung Foundation recommend a 3 month long-term test, ideally done during fall or winter time, to get the most accurate estimates.

To purchase do-it-yourself radon test kits, or find a radon measurement professional in B.C., visit takeactiononradon.ca/test. You can also check with your local library for access to free radon monitors to do an initial screening of your radon level, as a first step.