

What is Radon?

Radon is a cancer-causing radioactive gas that is naturally occurring in the soil and bedrock below homes. Because radon is a gas, it can move through soil and into the atmosphere or a home.

You cannot see, smell, or taste radon.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), radon is responsible for thousands of deaths per year in the United States. Prolonged exposure to high levels of radon can lead to lung cancer—radon's only known health effect.

Radon is considered to be the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Radon in Nebraska

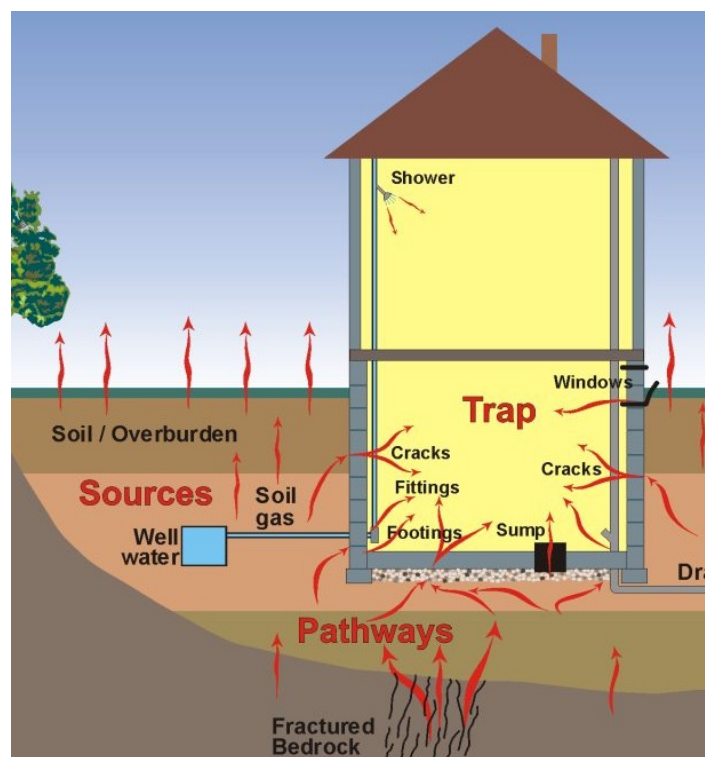
Radon comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water and into the air you breathe. Radon can be found all of the United States. In particular, Nebraska has a very high incidence of radon in homes; over half of the homes that test in the state have levels above the “action level” of 4.0 pCi/L.

In 2008, 75% of homes in the South Heartland District that were tested had high radon levels above the EPA “action level.”

Radon can enter your home through:

1. Cracks in solid floors
2. Construction Joints
3. Cracks in walls
4. Gaps in suspended floors
5. Gaps around service pipes or sump pits
6. Cavities inside walls
7. The water supply

Nearly 1 out of every 15 homes in the U.S. is estimated to have elevated radon levels.



Testing for Radon

Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon. Testing is inexpensive and easy — it should only take a few minutes of your time.

There are two ways to test your home:

Short-Term Testing

The quickest way to test is with short-term tests. Short-term tests remain for two days to 90 days. A short-term test will yield results quickly and give you a general idea of how much radon is present at the time of the test.

Long-Term Testing

Long-term tests remain in your home for more than 90 days. A long-term test will give you a reading that is more likely to tell you your home's year-round average radon levels.

Radon Test Results

Radon gas is measured in units of picocuries per liter (pCi/L), a standard measure of radioactivity. The EPA has set 4 pCi/L as a “recommended action level.” If a short term test is over 4 pCi/L, the recommended action is to perform a follow-up test to better characterize the radon levels. If a long-term test is over 4 pCi/L, action should be taken to reduce radon exposure.

For more information on RADON, call South Heartland District Health Department 1.877.238.7595



Reducing Radon Levels

Since there is no known safe level of radon, there can always be some risk. But the risk can be reduced by lowering the radon level in

your home. There are several proven methods to reduce radon in your home. These methods include:

1. Vent pipe system and fan—This is most effective method of reducing radon and is the method most often used in Nebraska homes. These systems remove radon from below the foundation and crawlspace before it enters the home. The radon is drawn into pipes and exhausted into the atmosphere where it is diluted to safe levels.
2. Sealing foundation cracks and other openings—Although this may help in reducing radon levels, sealing every entry route may be very difficult and new cracks will continually develop
3. Better ventilation of the home or continuous ventilation of the basement, especially in the summer months when windows can be left open.



Dedicated to preserving and improving the health within Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster Counties.

Phone: 402-462-6211

Toll Free: 1-877-238-7595

Fax: 402-462-6219

Website: southheartlandhealth.org

606 North Minnesota, Suite 2
Hastings, NE 68901

3/14/2017

Funding provided by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, State Radon Program



RADON

A guide to reducing your risk of radon exposure in your home