

Revisiting Radon

The initial article explaining radon and its effects on the body sparked some interest and further questions about what it is and where it comes from. There are some misconceptions about it and hopefully this will clear a few things up. Please contact me if you have further questions about Radon Gas.

How can I tell if my house has radon? The only way to know is to test for it. It is colorless, tasteless, and odorless. Professional radon testers can test for it in a variety of ways. You can also buy a test kit from a home improvement store that is accurate but not as detailed as a professional test.

Do older houses have more problems with radon? No. The age of the house has very little to do with radon concentration other than the fact that the old concrete may have more pathways for radon to get in. The highest readings I have ever seen were in houses 5-8 years old. The concentration level in the home has to do with the uranium deposits in the rocks and soil and how well the foundation is sealed.

Can high levels of radon be fixed? Yes. Radon mitigation companies generally guarantee their systems to lower the level below the acceptable level.

What types of tests are used? Two basic types—short term and long term. Short term tests are the most popular and are used for all real estate transactions. They generally are 48 hours long. Long term tests are sometimes used for homeowners who want to know the radon level of the house they are currently living in. They are at least 90 days long and are more likely to tell the true average concentration of the home.

Aren't radon tests expensive? The tests are relatively inexpensive when you consider the radiation that occurs in your body when you have high levels of radon. A typical professional test will cost \$90-\$150 depending on your location. Do-it yourself test kits can be purchased for \$15-\$25 dollars.

Is radon only a problem in certain areas of the country? High levels of radon can be found in every state in the country. There are areas of the country that are more likely to have elevated levels (such as the Midwest).

What is the highest radon concentration you have seen? The highest I have seen is 30 pCi/L. This is almost 8 times the recommended level of 4.0 pCi/L. (A measurement of radioactivity in the air in your home.) It was in the Goshen area.

Would you recommend getting every home tested? Yes. It is an easy, quick, and relatively inexpensive way to find out if you are living with a cancer-causing hazard that could be virtually eliminated.