

## Radon

Radon is an invisible, odourless, and tasteless radioactive gas that is released naturally from rock and soil in the ground. When radon gas mixes with outdoor air, it quickly reduces to low levels and is not harmful. However, radon gas can build up indoors and pose a risk to your health.

Being exposed to radon gas does not produce any immediate symptoms, but long-term exposure to radon – at any level but especially at high levels – can cause lung cancer. The risk of developing lung cancer due to radon is even higher for smokers. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for non-smokers and the second leading cause for smokers.

Lung cancer caused by radon is preventable because you can reduce the amount of radon in your home.

### Radon in British Columbia

Homes and buildings with high levels of radon can be found anywhere in British Columbia, but they are more commonly found in the Interior and Northern parts of the province. You can find an interactive map of indoor radon levels recorded in British Columbia here: <https://bccdc.shinyapps.io/bcradonmap/>

Even if you live in an area with generally lower levels of radon, it is still recommended that you test your home for radon. Radon levels can differ a lot between buildings, even if they're close together.

### Testing for radon in your home

Purchase a single-use test kit for \$30 to \$60 from a home improvement store or online from here: <https://takeactiononradon.ca/test-for-radon/radon-test-kits/>

Place the test kit in the lowest level of your home where you spend at least four hours a day, for at least three months over winter when windows are more likely to be closed, then send the test kit to its lab for analysis. In a few weeks, you will receive an average concentration over the tested period in a unit called Becquerels per cubic meter (Bq/m<sup>3</sup>).

Health Canada recommends that home improvements take place within two years if radon levels are above 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> and within one year if the levels are above 600 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>, though it is best to reduce radon levels to as low as reasonably possibly.

### Reducing radon in your home

Reducing radon levels in your home typically requires installing a system that draws radon gas from underneath your home and vents it outside. There are several different types of systems which often cost \$2,500 to \$5,000. There are more simple means to reduce radon levels such as sealing cracks in

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your basement floor and improving ventilation. A certified professional can help you decide what is best for your home and budget. Find a professional near you here: <https://c-nrpp.ca/find-a-professional/>

### **Additional Information**

The Canadian Lung Association provides grants for individuals diagnosed with lung cancer and with lower household income. Find more information here: <https://www.lung.ca/lungs-matter-radon-mitigation-support>

The 100 Test Kit Challenge is a program that provides free test kits to individuals in participating communities. Follow this link to find out if your community is participating in a 100 Test Kit Challenge this winter or help organize one in your community: <https://takeactiononradon.ca/resources/100-radon-test-kit-challenge/>

Libraries across British Columbia loan radon test kits. Find more information here: <https://bclung.ca/radon-detector-library-lending-program>

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