

RADON & MY HEALTH

JULY 2017

ABOUT RADON

What is Radon?

Radon is a radioactive gas released from the normal decay of uranium in rocks and soil. It emits particles that can be in the air we breath and can be deposited in our lungs.

Radon can enter homes through cracks in solid floors and walls, construction joints, gaps in suspended floors, gaps around service pipes, cavities inside walls, and the water supply. It has no smell or taste and the only way to know if it is in your home is through testing.

Health Risks

Radon usually does not present a health risk outdoors because the open air dilutes it sufficiently. However, indoors radon can build to dangerous levels. The EPA estimates that radon is the number one cause of lung cancer in individuals who do not smoke. Studies also show that the risk of lung cancer from smoking increases more than 25 percent for individuals living in an environment with high radon levels.

All individuals should try to limit their exposure to radon, however there are some individuals who may be at higher risk, including people with young children at home and people with a family history of cancer.

PREVALENCE

- For the past 20 years, CCHD has been collecting data regarding radon from radon testing kits. In those 20 years, 772 samples were collected and averaged 4.8pCi/L, with 60% of the samples averaging over 4.0 pCi/L. Data provided from the state (supplied by Aid Check, Inc) differs slightly with 38% showing results of 4.0 pCi/L and above in Cascade County.
- In Montana the average level of radon for indoor air is 5.9 pCi/L.
- Nationally, the level of radon found in indoor air is 1.3pCi/L

TESTING IS THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW YOUR
EXPOSURE LEVEL!
RADON IS COLORLESS, ODERLESS, & TASTELESS.



Effects of Radon and the prevalence in Cascade County

EPA

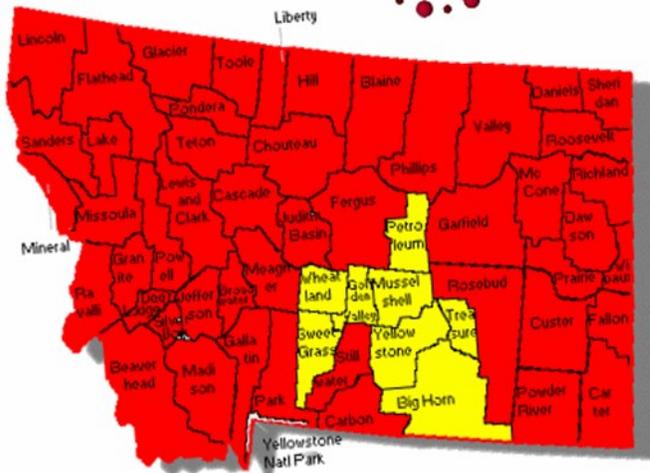
Recommendations

Having your home tested is the only effective way to determine whether you or your family is at risk of radon exposure. There are two general ways to test for radon:

- 1) Take a short-term test (remains in the home for two to ninety days). If your result is 4pCi/L or higher, take a follow up test (Step 2) to be sure.
- 2) Follow up with either a long-term test (remains in the home for longer than 90 days) or a second short-term test:
 - For a better understanding of your year-round average radon level, take a long-term test.
 - If you need results quickly, take a second short-term test. However, note that many lenders do not accept a short-term test for follow up. CCHD recommends following up with a long-term test.

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- - Above 4 pCi/L
- - 2 pCi/L - 4 pCi/L
- - Less than 2 pCi/L

MONTANA COUNTIES IN RED EXCEED 4.0 pCi/L

How can I reduce my risk?

The EPA recommends fixing your home if the results of one long-term test or the average of two short-term tests is above 4 pCi/L. The higher the level, the quicker you should have your home fixed.

Lowering high radon levels requires technical knowledge and special skills. CCHD recommends using a contractor trained to fix radon problems. A list of certified contractors in Montana can be found at mt-radon.info.

There are several ways to reduce radon in your home. One of the most commonly used ways is a vent pipe system and fan. The fan pulls radon from beneath the home and vents it to the outside where it dissipates. This system does not require major changes to your home.

Other things that can help reduce the amount of radon found in your home are sealing foundation cracks and other openings.

The right fix is going to be dependent on a number of factors such as when your home was built, the design of your home, and the extent of the radon problem. Radon contractors will work with you to find the best fix for your home.

LONG-TERM RADON TESTING KITS ARE AVAILABLE AT CCHD.

\$25.00

This health profile was based on information from:

www.cdc.gov
www.epa.gov
www.radonresources.com
mt-radon.info

For more information, suggestions, or contributions please contact :

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