

Radioactive gas is persistent health risk in Minnesota, late fall and winter best times to test

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Every 25 minutes, one person in the U.S. dies from radon-related lung cancer. It is the leading environmental cause of cancer deaths and the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. More than 21,000 lung cancer deaths are attributed to radon each year in the U.S.

Fortunately, the risk is largely preventable, by testing homes and fixing radon problems. More than 40 percent of Minnesota homes have dangerous levels of radon gas and state health officials say every home should be tested. November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. During the month of November, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is sponsoring radio ads in the Twin Cities to encourage people to test their homes. In addition, MDH has partnered with local public health departments to make test kits available to local residents at low or no cost.

Radon is odorless, colorless and tasteless, so the only way for homeowners to know if their home has radon is to test. Testing is easy, inexpensive and only takes 3-5 days. The best time to test is during the heating seasons, but testing can be done year-round. Test kits are available at city and county health departments, many hardware stores, or directly from radon testing laboratories. A list of participating health agencies and test kit vendors can be found on the MDH website at Radon Test Kits.

Tests should be done in the lowest level of the home that is frequently occupied. Tests should not be done in laundry or utility rooms, kitchens or bathrooms. Once you have tested, further action can be taken based upon your results. If your home's level is over 4 pCi/L, you should consider verification testing and having a radon mitigation system installed. Anyone interested in mitigating his or her home for radon should consult MDH's list of certified Radon Contractors/Mitigation Service Providers.

A new law, the Minnesota Radon Awareness Act, going into effect in January 2014, will require specific and detailed radon disclosure and notification during most home sales. It is highly recommended to test during real-estate transactions. Radon tests can be incorporated into a home inspection.

For more information on radon testing and mitigation visit [Radon in Minnesota Homes](#) or call the Minnesota Department of Health Indoor Air Unit at 651-201-4601 or 1-800-798-9050. To see how radon has affected the lives of cancer patients and their families visit [CanSar - Cancer Survivors Against Radon](#)