

# SO, YOU'RE BUYING A HOUSE!

Make Sure You Test for **RADON**



## WHAT IS RADON?

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer. Radon gas is inert, colorless, and odorless. Radon, in trace amounts, is naturally in the atmosphere.

## WHAT HEALTH PROBLEMS DOES RADON CAUSE?

When you breathe in radon, radioactive particles from radon gas can get trapped in your lungs. Over time, these radioactive particles increase the risk of lung cancer. It may take years before health problems appear. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking.

## HOW COMMON IS IT TO HAVE RADON IN HOMES?

Any home can have a radon problem. This means new and old homes, well-seal and drafty homes, and homes with or without basements. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), nearly one out of every 15 homes in the United States is estimated to have an elevated radon level (4 pico-curries of liter of air -pCi/L or more). Elevated levels of radon gas have been found in the District of Columbia. To see the District's radon map displaying radon levels throughout the city and receive a free radon test kit (available for DC residents) visit the District's radon web page at [doee.dc.gov/radon](https://doee.dc.gov/radon). Also, feel free to call the DOEE radon hotline at 202 535-2302.

## IS IT BAD TO BUY A HOUSE WITH RADON?

Radon can seep into any home that is in contact with the ground. Radon is undetectable unless you perform a radon

test. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer and according to the EPA and CDC, radon exposure is estimated to have caused approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths annually. Though radon seepage into a home may be common in some areas, radon can be mitigated using certified radon professionals. Make sure to ask the seller to show you a recent Radon test.

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO TREAT RADON?

The cost of a mitigation system may vary according to the home's design, size, foundation, construction materials and the local climate. Radon reduction systems average costs nationally are \$1,200 with a range from \$800 to \$1500 depending on house and market conditions. According to the EPA, when installed properly and completely, radon-resistant techniques can also make your home more energy efficient and help you save on your energy costs.

## IS RADON A DEAL BREAKER?

Radon is a concern because it is known to cause lung cancer. However, there are ways to fix a radon problem and even very high levels can be reduced to acceptable levels. The EPA recommends asking the seller for their radon test results. If the home has a radon-reduction system, ask the seller for any information they have about the system. If a test has not been done go [here](#) to see the EPA's Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon. There is a Radon testing checklist and more information.