

NATIONAL

BREATH E

the lung association

Home › Lung Health › Air Quality › Indoor Air Quality › **Radon**



Radon

Radon and your health

Radon is the second leading cause of [lung cancer](#) in Canada. As radon breaks down it forms radioactive particles that can get lodged into your lung tissue as you breathe. The radon particles release energy that can damage the cells in your lungs. When the cells in your lungs are damaged, there is the possibility of developing lung cancer.

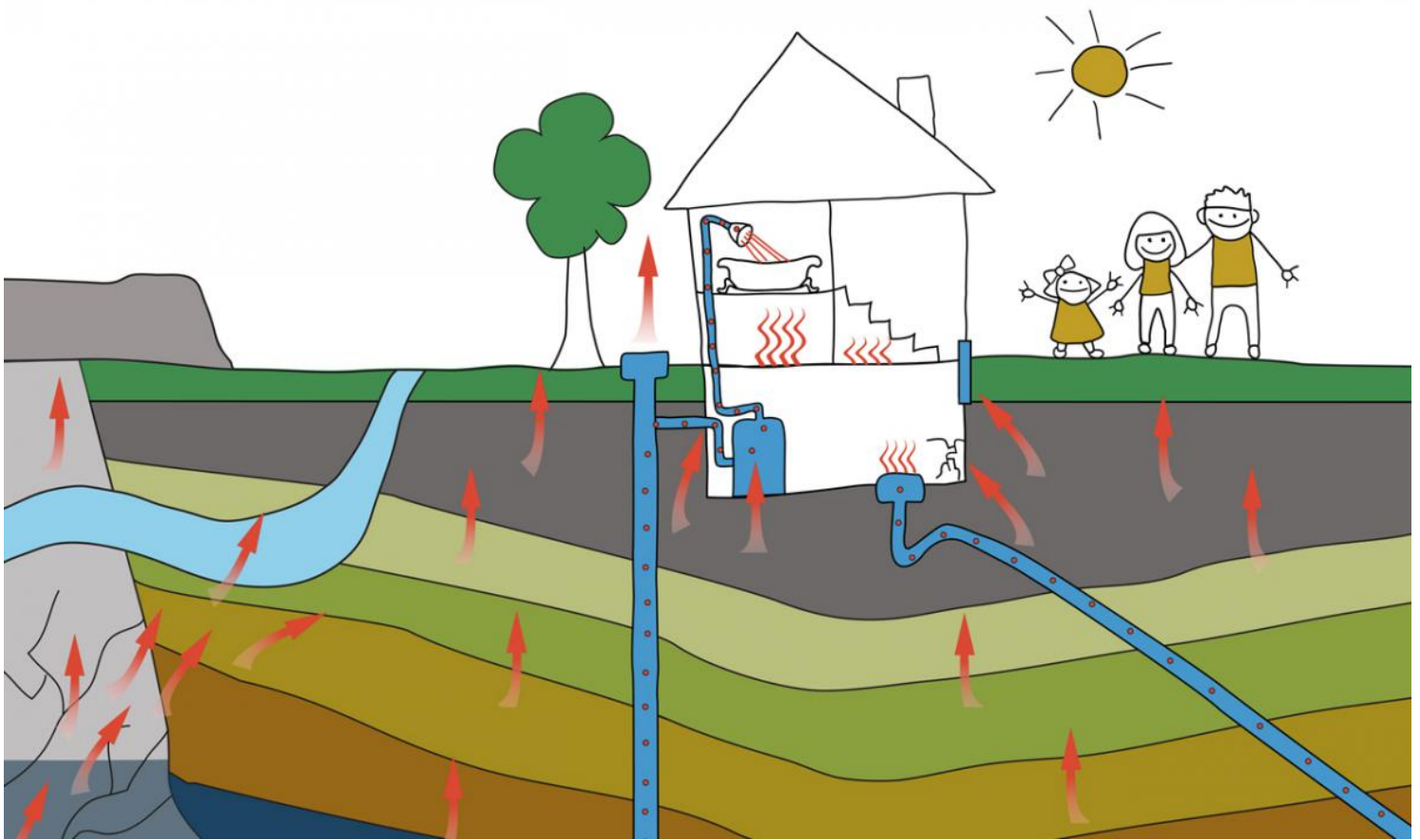
If you smoke and you live in a home with a high level of radon, you are at an even higher risk for lung cancer.

What is radon gas?

Radon is an invisible, odorless gas that can seep into your home through cracks in floors, walls and foundations. You can't see radon. You can't smell it or taste it.

Radon comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water. Radon gas escapes from the ground into the air outside. When radon mixes with the air outside, it's not a problem: the air outside

dilutes the amount of radon. But when radon seeps into a closed-in space like a house, it can be harmful. The radon gas can become trapped inside. You and your family can breathe in high levels of radon without knowing it.



How does radon get in your house?

Most of the time the air pressure inside your home is lower than the pressure in the soil surrounding your home's foundation. This difference in pressure can draw air and other gases in the soil, including radon, into the house. Gas containing radon can enter your home at any opening where the house contacts the soil. These openings can be present any home, new or old.

What you can do about radon

Test for Radon

The only way to know if your home has radon is to test for it. You can't see, smell, or taste radon. To test for radon you buy a radon test kit directly from us. [Click here.](#)

When should I test for radon?

It's best to test for radon over the winter months, when there is less ventilation (less air movement) in your home.

Radon test results

What you do depends on how much radon there is. Radon is measured in becquerels per cubic metre (Bq/m³).

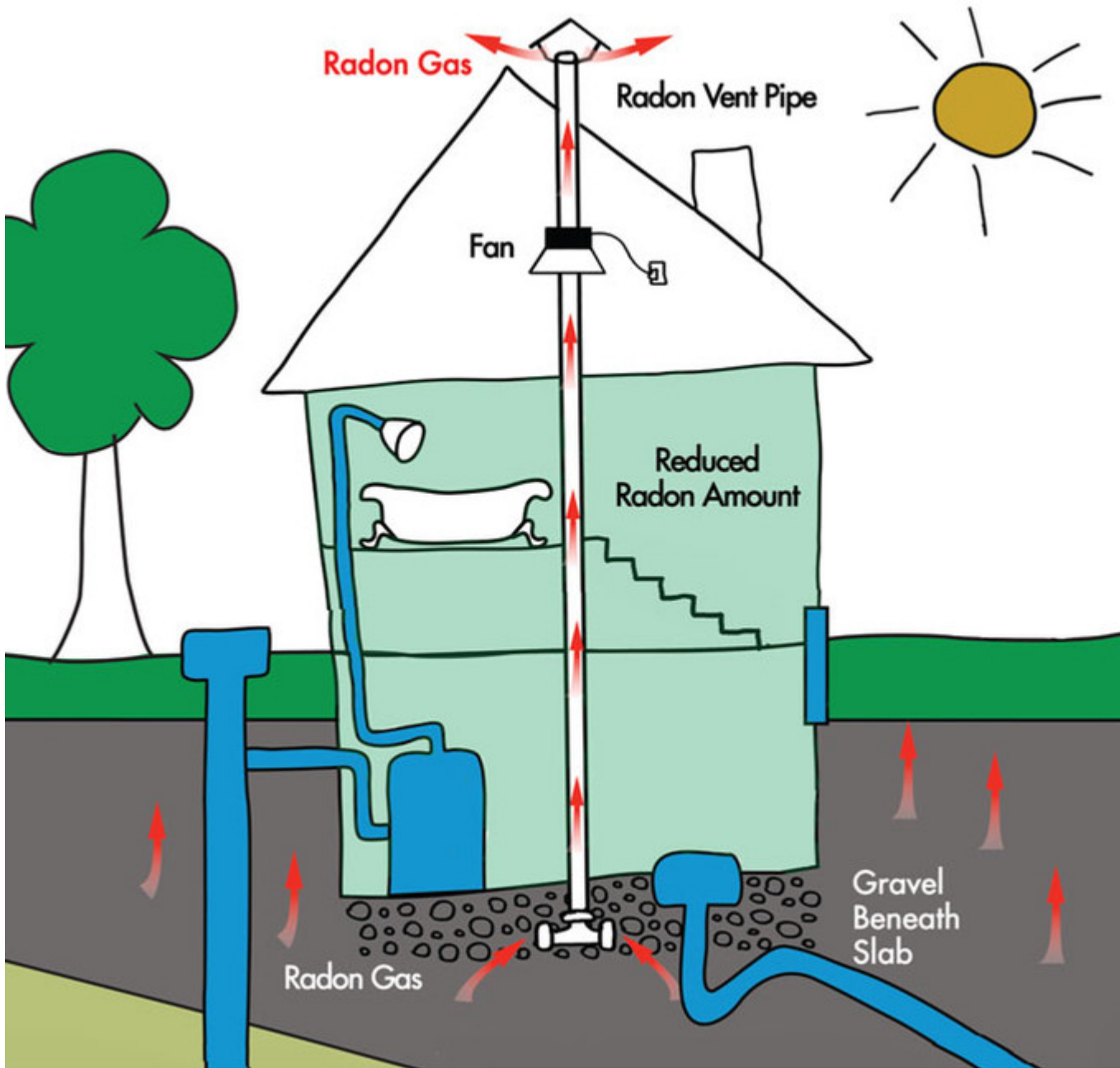
- If your home's radon level is less than 200 Bq/m³, Health Canada radon guidelines say that no action is required. However, even low levels of radon can be harmful. It's a good idea to try to lower your home's radon level as much as possible, even if it's already below 200 Bq/m³.
- If your home's radon level is between 200 and 600 Bq/m³, you should repair your home in the next two years.
- If your home's radon level is over 600 Bq/m³, you should repair your home within one year.

Reduce radon levels in your home

To lower the radon level, you need to hire a contractor to:

- Figure out where the radon is coming in
- Complete repairs to block it from coming in

Radon can come into your home through: sump pumps, cracks in foundations, spaces around pipes, unfinished floors, and other places. To solve your radon problem, you need an expert to find out where exactly the radon is getting in. A trained contractor with experience in radon mitigation (radon repairs) can examine your home, find where the radon is seeping in, and make the necessary repairs.



Find a trained contractor with experience in radon mitigation

The best way to lower radon levels is with a certified radon mitigation (reduction) professional who is certified with the Canadian - National Radon Proficiency Program (C-NRPP). They are trained to properly assess your home and design systems that efficiently and effectively reduce your radon level.

A radon mitigation system is installed so a fan draws air (and radon) up from beneath the foundation to the outdoors. This way it does not enter the home.

Often, the work involved to reduce radon levels can be done in one day comparable to a new furnace.

Depending on the year of construction of a home, building codes require installation of a radon stub pipe through the foundation of the house. This is not a mitigation system, but simply a rough in. It will NOT reduce radon levels without an installed system.

Learn more about reducing radon from Health Canada's Radon Reduction**Guide:** www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-risks-safety/radiation/radon.html.**Find a C-NRPP Certified Radon Reduction Mitigation Professional near you at** www.c-nrpp.ca.**What if I rent my home? Can I ask my landlord to test for radon?**

We do not know of any specific laws that force private landlords to test for radon or make repairs. If you rent, you could ask your landlord to test for radon. If your landlord refuses, you could try testing for radon yourself. After you get the results, share them with the landlord. If the results say your rental home does have a high level of radon, ask your landlord to hire a radon mitigation contractor.

Get more information on radonTo learn how to fix a radon problem, visit the www.homeradontest.ca.

Page Last Updated: 19/11/2020