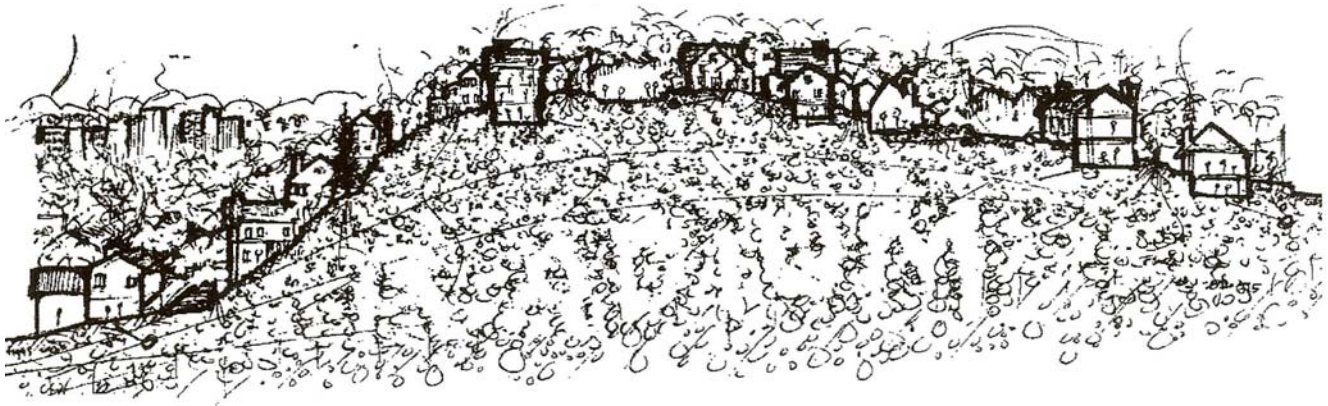


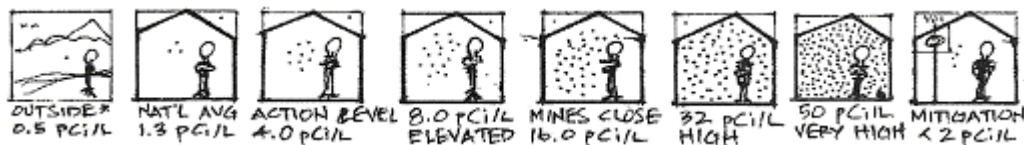
Radon and You



Radon is a radioactive gas continuously produced by the decay of the uranium and radium found almost everywhere in the crust of the earth. It is an inert gas that can move, undetected by our five senses, from the soil and into our homes and the air we breathe. In the air around us, the radon gas atoms continue to decay. These decay particles have a charge and can stick to the lining in the lung and close to sensitive cells. Each radioactive decay represents a tremendous amount of energy at the scale of cells and living tissue. **Radon gas is the largest single source of radiation most of us are exposed to.**

Radon gas and its decay products are believed to be the second largest cause of lung cancer in the American population after smoking. Reducing your exposure to the radon atom family decay is recognized as reducing your potential to develop lung cancer during your lifetime.

For radon to be a problem in your home, there must be a radon source, a path for the gas to move from the source into the air you breathe, and a driving force. Radon sources and pathways in the soil vary with geology and construction methods throughout the country. All homes can attract radon into them by simply being warmer than outdoors. The same forces that promote natural ventilation in your home also encourage radon entry. A drafty house can have a lot of radon gas. Poor ventilation can also contribute to elevated readings. **Some homes in this area have radon levels over 10 times the national average and over 100 times the outdoor average.** All homes have some radon. Some homes have much more than others. Indoor radon levels tend to be higher during the heating season and closed house weather conditions. All homes can be improved to provide low average radon exposures throughout the year.



Test your home to learn how strong your radon exposure is and take steps to reduce it. Testing your home can be easy. Test kits are readily available to provide short-term (2 to 90 days) and long term averages (91 days or longer). Both methods are good ways to gain an idea of your potential indoor radon exposure. Only use monitoring devices that are listed by the EPA to improve your confidence in the test results. The cost for a single test kit including postage and lab fees ranges from \$10 to \$30. A testing company will charge more depending on your needs. Some use calibrated continuous monitors that give you hourly readings during the test period and prints the results on site. If the test results indicate elevated radon levels, contact the state department of health for a list of radon mitigation contractors in your area..

