

Test your Home for Radon

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Testing your home for radon should be a priority for every Brown County resident. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from the soil. It is odorless and colorless and is only detected through testing. Radon from the soil moves through the dirt and rocks and into homes through pathways like cracks, gaps, and exposed soil.

When breathed in, the radioactive particles from radon gas can damage the cells that line the lung. Studies have shown that, over time, breathing radon gas can increase your risk of lung cancer. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for people that have never smoked. In the United States, it is estimated that radon exposure causes 21,000 lung cancer deaths a year, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This lung cancer risk increases for those who smoke.

The average level of radon in Minnesota homes is almost four times higher than the national average. The Minnesota Department of Health's interactive radon map (<https://mndatamaps.web.health.state.mn.us/interactive/radon.html>) shows that locally in Brown County, of homes that were tested for radon, over 70% had elevated levels. These high levels show the importance of testing for the dangerous gas.

Radon testing should be done at least every five years after the initial test. Testing is best done in the lowest level of the home that is used. The Minnesota Department of Health recommends using a short-term radon kit. These types of kits are easy to use, simply hang in the lowest level of the home and allow 2 to 5 days to pass. After you have allowed the kit to collect a sample, it is mailed to a lab to determine the level of your home. Another option for testing is to have a licensed professional come to

your home. If a high level of radon is detected, a radon mitagator should be installed in your home. This system will reduce radon concentrations to a healthy level.

Every January, the Minnesota Department of Health promotes the importance of radon testing throughout the state. Free radon test kits are distributed and are available at the Brown County Public Health office while supplies last. More information on radon, such as testing, mitigation, and test kits for purchase can be found at www.mn.gov/radon