

# MARYLAND RADON FACTS

How to protect yourself and your family from radon



## What is radon? Why Is it Important?

Radon is an invisible, odorless radioactive gas in the earth that can get into your home. Exposure to the combination of radon gas and cigarette smoke creates a greater risk of lung cancer than exposure to either factor alone.

The only way to know how much radon is in your home is do a radon test. If your home has too much radon, it is possible to remove it and lower the risk of cancer for you and your family.

## Where is radon found in Maryland? (See Map)

Although radon can be found anywhere, some parts of Maryland have soil that make radon more likely. Basement and first floors typically have the highest radon levels because of their closeness to the ground.

## Why should I test my home for radon?

Radon causes cancer. The longer you and your family are exposed to radon, the greater the risk of lung cancer. The risk is especially high for people who also smoke.

## How do I test my home?

Testing your home is easy. Look for test kits in most area hardware stores and home improvement stores. Look for test kits that are certified by NRPP or NRSB, and follow the directions on the package. Generally, you should:

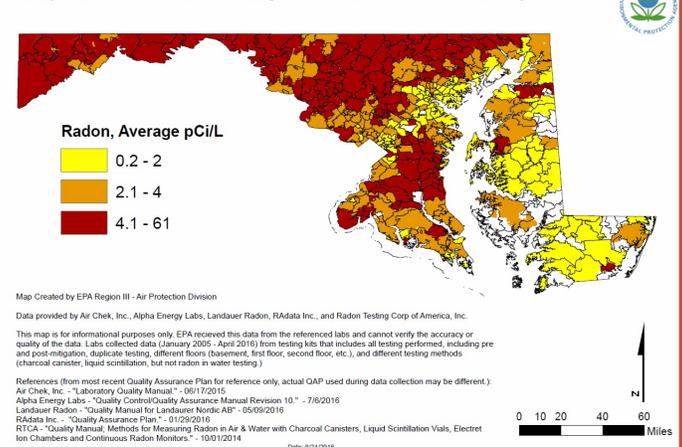
- Place the test kits in the lowest level that people will occupy, and/or the areas that are most heavily used (like bedrooms and playrooms)
- Place the kits in a dry area (not bathrooms or kitchens) where the kits will not be disturbed, and are not near moving air (windows, ventilation ducts)
- Leave the kits for somewhere between two and 90 days (the longer the test, the more accurate it is), seal them up immediately and mail to the testing company

For More Information: 1-866-703-3266

## Quick Facts:

- Testing your home for radon is cheap and easy, and it's the only way to know if your family is at risk
- It's easy to fix radon problems in homes and schools
- There are ways to make new homes radon-resistant

Maryland: 2005-2016 Average Radon Measurements By ZIP Code



Radon concentrations across Maryland. See interactive map at: <https://maps.health.maryland.gov/phpa/eh/Radon>

# What Does My Test Mean?

Your radon test result is used to decide whether additional testing or some mitigation (removal of radon) is necessary. If your test is:

Less than 2 pCi/L	2-Less than 4 pCi/L	4 pCi/L or more
No further action is needed at this time; consider another test in the future if the condition of the home changes (cracks in basement, etc.)	No action is needed, but you should re-test at least every five years or if home conditions change (construction, new basement, etc.)	You should do another test (either short- or long-term) to confirm the results; if confirmed, consult a certified radon mitigation contractor.

While radon does increase the risk of cancer, the good thing is that you can eliminate the risk increase by getting rid of the radon. If your home has radon, the risk of cancer is higher. Call the Maryland Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

## Can I fix my home if it has radon?

Yes. Fixing your home is usually easy and not very expensive. You can find a list of radon contractors at: [www.mde.state.md.us](http://www.mde.state.md.us) under the Air Tab and look for the radon Link. You should look for contractors who are credentialed by the American Association of Radon Scientist & Technologist (AARST) and are licensed by the Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC).

## What about buying or selling a home?

MDE and MDH recommend testing your home for radon before you sell it. It's good for both you and the buyer to know. If you are buying a home, MDE and MDH recommend asking about radon, and about any testing or mitigation that has been done.

## New homes can be built with features to reduce radon

Building new homes with simple and cost-effective radon-resistant features can reduce radon entry. Contact your builder or visit [www.epa.gov/radon/rrnc/index.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/rrnc/index.html) for more information.

Every home should be tested before, or soon after, you move in. Even homes built with radon-resistant construction features should be tested. If high radon levels are found, it is easier and costs less to reduce radon levels in homes that are built radon-resistant.

## For More Information:

[www.mde.maryland.gov](http://www.mde.maryland.gov), look under the Air Tab for radon  
<https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OEHFP/EH/Pages/Radon.aspx>

<https://www.epa.gov/radon>

Environmental Health Helpline: 1-866-703-3266

Contact your local health department



**Maryland**  
Department of  
the Environment



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