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# Beware the ?radon gas?

When asked, most people have no idea what radon gas is, however is can be deadly and is known as a ?silent killer?.
Radon gas is an odourless, colourless gas that is formed from the natural breakdown of uranium in the earth. Though you can't see it or smell it, radon can enter your home through cracks in your foundation, well water, building materials and other sources, where it can contaminate the air you breathe.
Long term exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking and the leading cause of lung cancer for people who have never smoked. In 2009 Health Canada conducted a two year study of radon concentrations in homes across Canada and found that approximately 7% of homes have high levels of radon. Radon levels vary significantly across the country and that there are no areas of the country that are ?radon free?, but there are areas of the country where high levels of indoor radon are more prevalent.
No matter where your home is located, the only way to know if it has a high level of radon is to test it. If levels are elevated there are ways to reduce them to protect your health.
Any home, whether new or old, with a basement or without, well insulated or drafty, can have a radon problem. Radon is measured in Becquerels per meter cubed or Bq/m3. As per Canadian guidelines, Heath Canada recommends that you take action to lower levels if they are above 200Bq/m3.
Techniques to lower radon levels are effective. Radon levels in most homes can be reduced by more then 80% for about the same cost as other common home repairs such as replacing the furnace or air conditioner.
Radon gas can be deadly and a certified radon mitigation contractor will make sure your home's radon level is lowered and your home is a healthier place to live. To find a certified mitigator, contact the Canadian National Radon Proficiency Program at 1-800-269-4174, the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists at info@carst.ca or Health Canada at radon@hc-sc.gc.ca

**By Michelle Austen**