Chances are you've already heard of radon - a radioactive gas that can cause lung cancer.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ranks indoor radon among the most serious environmental health problems facing us today. After smoking, it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States causing an estimated twenty-one thousand (21,000) lung cancer deaths a year. It is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

Radon is a naturally occurring gas that seeps into buildings from the surrounding soil. In some cases, well water may be a source of radon.

Radon exposure increases your risk of lung cancer. Radon gas decays into radioactive particles that can get trapped in your lungs when you breathe. As these particles break down, they release small bursts of energy. These bursts can damage lung tissue and lead to lung cancer over the course of your lifetime. Your risk of getting lung cancer from radon depends mostly on three factors:

1. The level of radon gas in the air you breathe;
2. The duration of exposure (how many hours you spend exposed);
3. Your smoking habits.

What you might not have heard - elevated levels of radon have been found in classrooms in a number of schools in Connecticut. Therefore, it is important that students, teachers, and parents are aware that a potential problem could exist in their school. A nationwide survey of radon levels in schools estimates that nearly one in five has at least one schoolroom with a short-term radon level above the EPA action level of 4.0 pCi/L (picocuries per liter) - the level at which EPA recommends that schools take action to reduce it.

For More Information

Contact:

Phone: 860-509-7300
Fax: 860-509-7295
Email: DPH.RadonReports@ct.gov
Web: www.ct.gov/radon

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Department of Public Health
Radon Program

410 Capitol Avenue, MS# 12-RAD
P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

Adapted from the following publication:
As Easy as 1-2-3!

Step 1: Initial Testing:
- Take short-term tests

Step 2: Follow-up Testing:
- Take a second short-term test in rooms where the initial level is 4.0 pCi/L or more

Step 3: Take action to reduce levels if:
- The average of the initial and follow-up short-term tests is 4.0 pCi/L or more.

Four is the magic number...

If radon levels exceed 4.0 pCi/L, action should be taken to reduce radon in your school. Fortunately, even if your school does have high radon levels, the problem can be corrected. Proven techniques are available that reduce radon levels and lower risks of lung cancer.

In Summary

Radon
- Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas
- Radon usually comes from soils and rock, but can also come from well water
- Breathing in radon increases your risk of lung cancer
- Testing is the only way to find out if radon is a problem

Radon in Schools
- Testing is as easy as 1-2-3
  1. Testing must occur in all occupiable spaces at or below ground level
  2. Testing must occur while school is in session
  3. If high levels are found, confirm them
- Radon testing is required in public schools in Connecticut
- When high levels are found, steps will be taken to reduce radon gas in the school
- The CT Department of Public Health can provide guidance documents and information to schools and the general public

Radon in Homes
- You and your children probably spend more time in your home than you do at work or school
- Test your home for radon!
- The Radon Program can provide you with a list of qualified professionals