



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

It's Time to Test for Radon

Now is the perfect time to test your home for radon!

What is radon?

Radon is a colourless, naturally-occurring gas that comes from the soil in all parts of the world. You never know what the levels of radon are in your house unless you test – your house could have very different results from your neighbour's. Most homes will have some level of radon.

Why is radon a concern?

As radon levels increase, so too does the risk of lung cancer. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in Canada after smoking, and when combined with tobacco smoke exposure, the risk goes up even higher.

How do I know if I have radon?

The only way to know the radon level in your house is to test. The test involves placing a small plastic “puck” in the lowest-occupied level of your home, and then just waiting! Over time, radon will make a mark on the inside of the detector. A lab will count these marks and translate them into a radon concentration. It's best to leave the detector in place for a longer period of time (up to one year) to get a good average reading. If a shorter testing period is used (at least three months), it's best to test during the colder, winter months when people spend more time indoors with the windows and doors closed.

FNHA will work with your community to provide everything needed to test your home for radon: we will supply the detectors, and in many cases can even come to place them in your home and collect them after the testing period. We will also provide shipping to get the detectors to the lab, and will interpret the results for you and provide advice on next steps.

What happens if I have high levels of radon?

Health Canada has different recommendations for action depending on how high the levels are. If levels are above 200, we recommend that you take action within two years. If they're over 600, we recommend action within one year.

Reducing radon levels is generally a fairly straightforward process that involves allowing the gas from under the building to vent through a pipe, so it doesn't stay in your home. Indigenous Services Canada can often provide funding for this work in communities, in coordination with your Housing Department.

What if I have more questions?

FNHA is here to help and can answer any questions you might have! You can contact your Environmental Health Officer at environmental.health@fnha.ca