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Radon: What You Can't See Can Hurt You

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The topic of radon gas rarely arises outside of a home sale. Perhaps we should strike up a conversation.

According to the EPA, radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and responsible for around 21,000 deaths per year.

Radon is an odorless gas that is created during the natural decay of uranium in the soil. It doesn't matter if your house is old or new, big or small, radon seeps up through the crawl space or through the concrete in your basement and gets trapped in your house. The EPA recommends a radon level below 4.0 picoCuries per liter of air (pCi/L).

Mitigation can be simple, but costly. It largely depends on how high your radon level are and if you have a passive system installed or not. Most municipalities in Northern Colorado now require a passive system to be installed at the time of construction. This involves drilling a PVC pipe into the concrete basement slab to the gravel below and venting the pipe to the outside of the home commonly through the attic. If your home is equipped with a passive system, it can cost as little as \$500 to add an "active" fan to the system to draw air from below your basement slab out through the venting system. In most instances, an active radon mitigation system will lower your radon levels below the EPA recommendations. If a passive system isn't present, full mitigation systems run between \$1,000 - \$2500.

Why does the topic of radon come up in the home selling process? Realtors and home inspectors recommend testing the radon levels at the time a home inspection is performed. If high levels of radon are found, buyers request mitigation and this expense generally falls on the sellers. If you are planning to purchase new construction, ask your builder what their policy for radon mitigation is. Some will address the issue, but many do not include an active system as part of their standard features.

To test radon levels in your home, many municipalities such as the City of Fort Collins, sell radon test kits. You can also order a kit from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment or contact a local Radon Mitigation Professional.

For more information visit:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/categories/services-and-information/environment/radon>

