

Radon in Vermont - From the Ground into our Schools

Facts about Radon

- ◆ Radon is a naturally-occurring radioactive gas that seeps into buildings, including schools, through cracks or openings in the foundation or slab. When this occurs, radon can accumulate in dangerous levels.
- ◆ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ranks indoor radon among the most serious environmental health problems facing us today.
- ◆ Radon exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer overall.
- ◆ The EPA estimates that 21,000 people, **including 51 Vermonters, die each year** from radon-induced lung cancer.
- You can't see, taste or smell radon. The only way to know it is a problem is to test for it.



Kids are particularly vulnerable to radon exposure

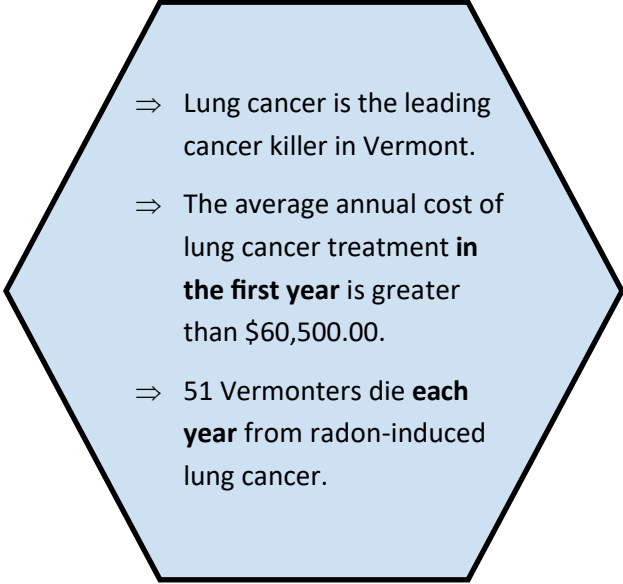
- ◆ Due to lung shape and size differences, children have higher estimated radiation doses than adults. Children also breathe at a higher rate.
- ◆ The risk of lung cancer in children resulting from radon exposure maybe be almost twice as high as the risk to adults exposed to the same amount of radon.
- ◆ If children are also exposed to tobacco smoke, the risk of getting lung cancer increases at least 20 times.

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“In everybody’s mind [smoking] is the only way you can get lung cancer. But it could have been something so simple as where you lived or [where you went to school].”

“We put smoke alarms, exit signs and sprinkler systems....in these buildings to protect people. ...And yet we don’t do anything to protect them against a known carcinogen. “

-Parents of Vermont school children in a focus group conducted by the UVM School of Medicine Public Health Project, Fall 2017

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- ⇒ Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in Vermont.
 - ⇒ The average annual cost of lung cancer treatment **in the first year** is greater than \$60,500.00.
 - ⇒ 51 Vermonters die **each year** from radon-induced lung cancer.

It’s time to **require** radon testing & disclosure in Vermont schools: Top Five Reasons

1. The Vermont Department of Health offers free radon testing to schools, yet since 2001 only 74 schools have taken advantage of the program. This leaves thousands of students, staff and teachers not knowing the levels of radon in their schools.
2. Of the schools that have tested for radon since 2005, 14% have levels above the EPA action level, with some as high as five times the action level.
3. The cost benefit of reducing the risk of lung cancer for children and staff far outweighs the cost to test and to mitigate radon in a school.
4. In a Fall 2017 survey conducted by UVM School of Medicine students in partnership with the American Lung Association, 83% of Vermont parents/guardians of K-12 students support laws requiring radon testing and disclosure.
5. **It’s incumbent on the State of Vermont to protect the health of Vermont’s school children, staff and teachers!**