

# Radon

## *What You Need to Know*

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As a private well owner, you are in a unique position: You control your own water supply. With this benefit come some responsibilities. You are responsible for protecting your valuable ground water resource as well as your family's health.

Occasionally, based on a news report or the color or smell of your water, you may wonder about the safety of your water supply. What do you do? Testing your water for the most common well contaminants is the best course of action. Answers to some questions you may have follow.

### **How common are water problems?**

“Pure water does not exist – all natural water contains some gases and minerals and is likely to contain some microbial organisms. Most water bacteria are harmless and many are actually beneficial.

### **I've heard about radon. What is it?**

Radon is a naturally occurring, colorless, odorless, water-soluble gas produced by the radioactive decay of radium. Radium is common in the earth's crust. High levels of radon have been found in all 50 states.

### **Why do we test for radon?**

Exposure to radon has been recognized as a health risk. The two diseases of principal concern are stomach cancers from ingestion of radon and lung cancer from inhalation of radon by-products. Fortunately, radon in the air and in ground water, once identified, can be eliminated.

### **How does radon enter a water system?**

While radon can enter a home through well water, the risk of radon entering homes through water is small compared with that of radon entering through the soil. It is uncommon for water in a house to have extremely high levels of radon.

### **Is my private water well at risk?**

Higher levels of radon are generally found in private well water supplies than in municipal water systems. The reason for this is the short half-life of radon. Radon in public water supplies usually decays to low concentrations before the water is delivered to users, especially if the water has been treated. Because a private well system delivers only to one or two households, there is a greater chance the radon will not dissipate before the water is consumed.

### **How do you treat for radon?**

Radon problems in water can be easily fixed. The most effective treatment is to remove radon from the water before it enters the home by aeration or carbon absorption.

For all of your well water needs, contact:



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