



These DIY test kits can help keep you healthy.

You probably tested radon levels when you bought your house. But have you retested since then? And what about your drinking water...do you really know what toxins it might contain? Most people aren't sure exactly when to test for such in-home pollution or the best ways to do it. *What you need to know...*

THE DANGER: RADON

Contrary to popular belief, elevated radon levels have been found in homes in *all* states. And even though it originates underground, this tasteless, odorless, invisible radioactive gas can seep into the house through cracks in the foundation or basement and into the air at any time. Radon exposure is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the US.

What you need to do: Test for radon every two years. Over time, cracks in the foundation of a home and deteriorating weather stripping can cause radon to seep inside the home. Even if you have a radon -mitigation system, it may have been installed improperly or had a mechanical failure. Also, be sure to test for radon following a renovation.

Reason: Your home traps radon inside. When you put in new windows, roofing or siding, for example, you might be trapping more radon indoors than you were prior to the renovation.

Alert: Sex Can Cause a Heart Attack

What to look for: Short-term and long-term radon tests are available. A short-term test (used for two to four days) offers a quick snapshot of your risk and can indicate whether long-term testing or mitigation is needed. Short-term tests can be used when you need the results quickly, such as before a home sale.

A long-term test remains in place for 90 days to a year. It is more accurate, since it gives an average of the radon in your home over a longer period of time through various ventilation and weather conditions. If you want immediate radon results, you can hire a home inspector or mitigator who has a continuous radon monitor (CRM). This device has a sensor to read radon levels immediately.

Test results, from either the short or long test, of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or higher are dangerous, according to the EPA. But in 2009, the World Health Organization determined that a dangerous level of radon was considerably lower, 2.7 pCi/L. So, in my opinion, it's a good idea to hire a mitigation expert to install a ventilation system to reduce levels of 2.7 pCi/L or above.

Alert: For a Better Memory, Just Make a Fist

Kits to try: Doctor Home Air by Alpha Energy Laboratories, Short- Term Radon Test, \$11.95...and Long-Term Radon Test, \$24.95 plus shipping and handling, DoctorHomeAir.com/radontest. This company has knowledgeable customer-service reps who can help find radon experts in your state. Or you can use the kits from Air Chek, Inc., Short-Term Radon Test Kit, \$14.95...and Alpha Track Long-Term Test, \$25.95, both with prepaid shipping, Radon.com. Air Chek is an excellent provider of educational material on radon.

THE DANGER: TOXINS IN YOUR WATER

Most people know that there can be hundreds of chemicals in drinking water. That's why home owners with wells have their water tested regularly—and why many of us use water-filtration systems. But your water may still have contaminants.

How to start: To find out if pollutants exceeding health guidelines have been detected in the tap water in your area, go to EWG.org/tap-water and enter your zip code.

What you need to do: If you have well water, conduct a test for total coliform bacteria, nitrates, total dissolved solids and pH levels annually and do a comprehensive test (such as those below) every three years. If you have city water, a comprehensive test every three years should be sufficient. Do additional checks if you notice a change in the color, taste or smell of your water...or if your skin becomes irritated with no obvious explanation.

Kits to try: For well water, Water-check, \$167 plus shipping and handling...or for city water, City-Check Standard, \$206 plus shipping and handling, both at Watercheck.com. The kits include vials you fill with water to send to a lab for analysis.

Special Alert: The Ultimate Alzheimer's-Fighting Diet

If you have elevated radon levels in your air, you may also have elevated levels in your water, especially if you have well water—radon from the soil can seep into your water. If you have high radon levels in your water, a specialist can install filters or aeration devices.

Kit to try: National Testing Laboratories Standard Radiological Test, \$150 plus shipping and handling, Watercheck.com. This test measures radon and uranium in well or city water.

Source: Caroline Blazovsky, president of My Healthy Home, a Whitehouse Station, New Jersey, firm that has advised home owners on indoor air-quality products and services for more than 10 years. A certified indoor environmentalist (CIE) and certified mold remediator (CMR), she is a member of the Indoor Air Quality Association. HealthyHomeExpert.com

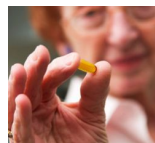
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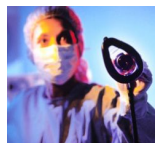
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Listing Details
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