

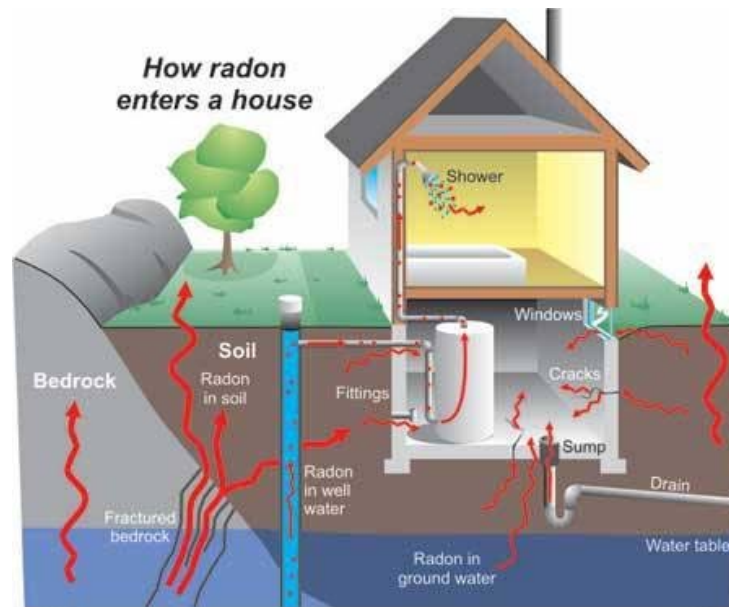
Winter Air Quality Tips

As we bundle up for another winter season, there are a few things we should all be doing in order to improve the air quality of our homes as we spend more time indoors.

Radon

Radon is an invisible radioactive gas that is produced from the breakdown of uranium in rocks and soil in the ground. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer after smoking, linked to 16 per cent of lung cancer cases in Canada.

Radon can get into any home or building through any openings in the ground, wall or pipes, and it can build up to harmful levels inside.



You can find out the radon level in your home by conducting a simple radon test. The best time to test for radon is during the colder months of the year when the home is sealed up and windows and doors are closed.

You can buy a radon test kit online at many Lung Association offices across Canada and at certain hardware retailers. You can also hire a certified radon professional to do the test for you. Visit www.takeactiononradon.ca for more information about where you can buy a test kit or find a certified radon professional or call The Lung Association at 1-888-566-5864.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is another invisible gas that can build up indoors and can sometimes be fatal. It is important to ensure that high levels of CO do not build up indoors.

CO is produced when fuel is burned by:

- Cars, trucks, motorcycles, snowmobiles, lawn mowers and gardening tools
- Fireplaces, wood stoves, space heaters
- Gas/oil furnaces or water heaters

- Gas stoves/ovens
- Barbeques (e.g. charcoal, propane) or camping stoves

Breathing in low levels of CO can cause tiredness, shortness of breath, headaches, or reduced motor functions.

Higher levels of CO can cause dizziness, weakness, nausea/vomiting, sleepiness, difficulty thinking, loss of consciousness, and death.

Here are some tips to help ensure you and your family are safe from CO:

- Check your heating system with a certified professional every year – this includes checking the furnace, wood/gas stove, fireplace, flue and chimney for gas leaks.
- Place a CO detector on each level of your home close to sleeping areas so people can hear them. Test and replace batteries as needed. Look for the expiry date on CO detectors; if none is found, detectors should be replaced every five years.
- Do not idle a vehicle or run fuel-burning machines inside the garage.
- NEVER use these items to heat your home since they release CO: gas stove/oven, space heater, barbeque, or camp stove.

As of October 15, 2014, all Ontario homes are required to have CO detectors located near sleeping areas. For more information about CO, visit <http://www.yourhealthyhome.ca/page.aspx?pid=1345>.

Indoor Smoke

During the winter, we may be exposed to various sources of smoke inside the home. Smoke can come from cigarettes, wood burning fireplaces, and candles.

If you or someone else smokes, make sure you smoke outside. Even better, think about quitting. Cigarette smoke remains long after the cigarette is put out, so it is important to eliminate smoking from happening indoors.

Get your fireplace checked for any leaks or blockages. Since burning wood releases pollutants into the air we breathe, we recommend not burning in a residential setting. If you must heat with wood, only burn clean, dry wood. Never burn plastics, newspaper, coloured paper, painted wood or other materials that can release dangerous contaminants into the air.

