



# Radon

## Background Information:

Radon is an invisible radioactive gas. It occurs naturally in the environment, and can build up to unsafe levels inside any home. The only way to know if your home has a radon gas problem is to test for it. Radon has been found in all types of homes- (old and new, well sealed, and drafty) with and without basements.

Breathing radon gas can increase your risk for lung cancer. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers, and the second leading cause of lung cancer among smokers. The EPA estimates that radon causes around 21,000 deaths from lung cancer each year in the United States.

## Symptoms:

It usually takes years of exposure at high levels before any symptoms of lung cancer develop. At that point, symptoms match that of smoking-induced lung cancer.

## Picocuries per liter definition (pCi/L):

The standard measure for radiation in the air used in the U.S. It is most commonly used with radon gas.

- **Low Risk:**  
Less than 2.0 pCi/L
- **Moderate Risk:** 2.0 - 3.9 pCi/L
- **High Risk:**  
Over 4.0 pCi/L

## Who is at risk?:

Radon is present in every state, but radon levels vary from home to home. Any level of exposure has some risk. The risk is 10 to 20 times greater if you smoke.

## Recommendations:

**Communities can-** Spread awareness about the health risks of radon exposure.

**Providers can-** Educate their patients about radon exposure in addition to promoting a smoke free lifestyle. Additionally, make patients aware of where test kits can be purchased and why they should test their home.

**Family members and friends can-** Educate each other and advocate for radon testing. Encourage others to quit smoking.

**Schools can-** Promote awareness among students and their families, and get facilities tested and mitigate exposure issues.

## EPA Recommended Testing Steps:

1. Use a short term test kit (remains in the home for 2 - 90 days).
2. If the test shows a level of 4.0 pCi/L or higher, follow up with another short term test or a long term test (remains in the home for over 90 days) to double-check the results.
3. If either follow up test shows a level of 4.0 pCi/L or higher, consider your radon reduction options. Check out the websites listed at the bottom of the back page for some reduction ideas.





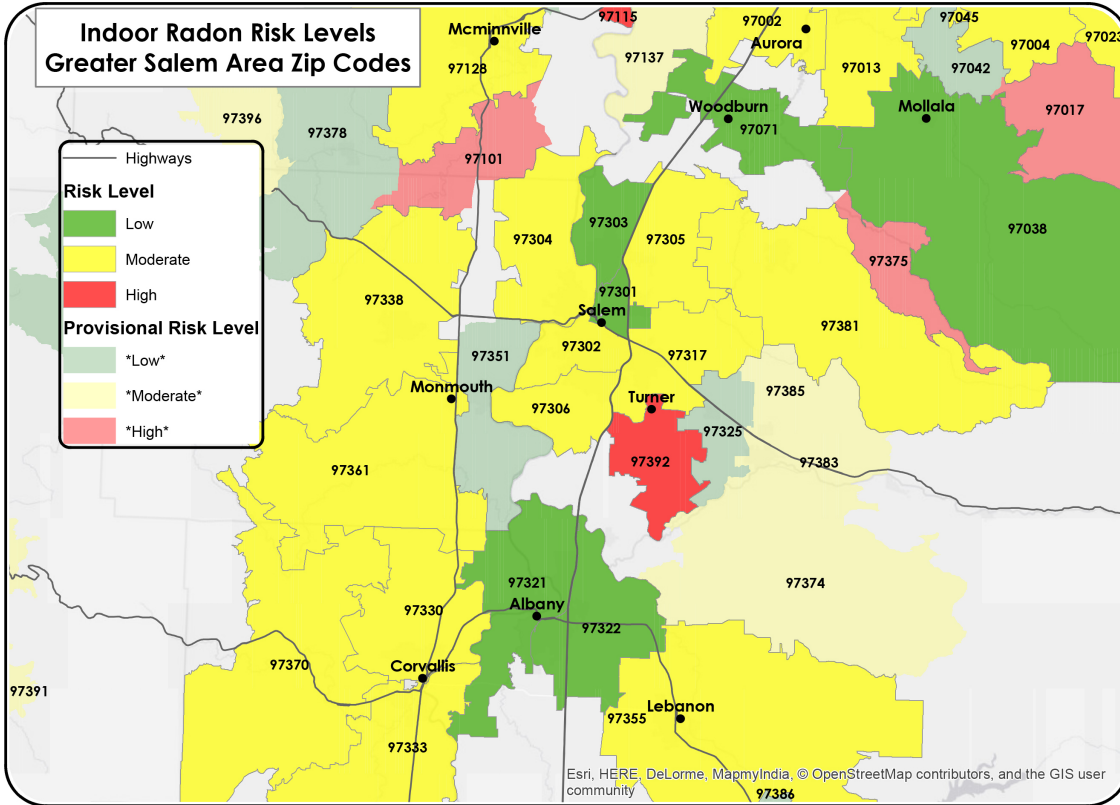
OREGON



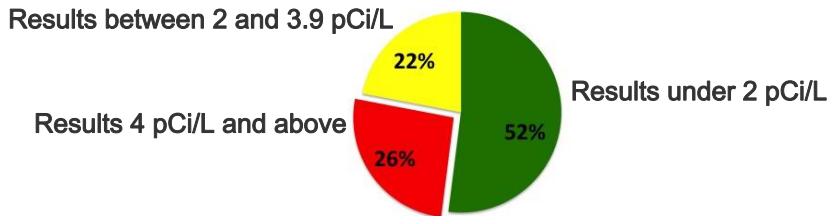
### Radon in Marion County:

According to 2014 data from the state radon officer, Marion County has an average indoor radon level of 3.1 pCi/L. This is over two times higher than the national average of 1.3 pCi/L. In total, almost half of all homes in the county test above moderate levels of radon (over 2.0 pCi/L) and within the range for radon reduction as recommended by the EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General. About 1 in every 4 homes in Marion County test at levels of 4.0 pCi/L or higher. Additionally, the Aurora, Salem, Silverton, and Turner areas in Marion County tested the highest for radon gas (4.0 pCi/L or higher) in the county.

### Radon Risk Level By Zip Code, 2014



### Percentage of Marion County Homes at Low, Medium, and High Risk for Radon Exposure, 2014



\*Oregon Health Authority. Radon Gas. <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/HealthyNeighborhoods/RadonGas/Pages/index.aspx>

### Resources/Contact Info:

If you would like further information or still have questions about radon, please call the National Radon Hotline: 1-800-55RADON (557-2366)

If you would like to purchase a radon test kit, please call: 1-800-SOS-RADON (767-2366)

If you would like to purchase a test kit online, please visit National Radon Program Services at Kansas State: <http://sosradon.org/>

If you would like to reach the Marion County Environmental Health Department, please call: 503-588-5346

Please like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter for the most updated information about important events in our county.



### Other Sources of Information:

**Oregon Health Authority:** <https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/HealthyNeighborhoods/RadonGas/Pages/index.aspx>  
**American Lung Association:** <http://www.lung.org/associations/states/oregon/>  
**U. S. Environmental Protection Agency:** <http://www.epa.gov/radon/>