

Co-benefits for the prevention of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) with similar risk factors and opportunities for health promotion

Reducing exposure to radon not only lowers the risk of lung cancer but also benefits overall health. Improving indoor air quality to reduce radon levels can alleviate respiratory issues, such as asthma. Addressing radon also complements efforts to stop smoking, because both smoking and high levels of radon increase lung cancer. Living in a healthy environment with low levels of radon can positively affect mental well-being. Encouraging radon testing and making healthy lifestyle choices fosters a culture of prevention that reduces the incidence of multiple NCDs. Integrating radon risk reduction into public health strategies enhances overall health outcomes.

Myths versus Facts

MYTH: Exposure to radon does not pose a significant health risk.

FACT: Radon contributes to about 19 000 lung cancer deaths in Europe every year.

MYTH: Only older homes have a high radon risk.

FACT: Newer homes can also have high levels of radon, because radon levels depend on the geological of the ground beneath buildings.

MYTH: Testing for radon is expensive and complicated.

FACT: Radon testing is simple and affordable in most countries. Testing is crucial to identify and address exposure to radon.

MYTH: It is not possible to reduce radon once a house has been built.

FACT: Removing soil gas from under the foundations of houses reduces indoor radon.

Specific target groups

Low-income families: They often live in rental properties where radon testing and mitigation are neglected due to financial constraints.

Renters: Individuals in multi-unit buildings or basements may face higher risks and have less control over their environments.

Children: Those in day-care centres or schools in radon-prone areas are particularly vulnerable.

Elderly residents: Older adults living in long-term care facilities may experience prolonged exposure to radon.

Occupational groups: Workers in mining, tourism caves, and water treatment facilities may face higher risks of exposure to radon.

Geographical variability: Certain regions, particularly those with high natural uranium content in the soil, may have elevated radon levels, requiring targeted interventions.

Learn about policies that help support reducing your radon risk

Effective policies that support radon mitigation play a significant role in reducing the risk of cancer and improving overall health. Some examples are:

- **National radon testing programmes:** Subsidized or free radon testing kits help more people identify and address high radon levels.
- **Radon-resistant building codes:** Building codes mandate radon-resistant construction techniques to lower radon levels and reduce the costs of radon mitigation.
- **Public awareness campaigns:** Educational campaigns to inform the public about the risks of radon and the importance of testing and mitigation.
- **Targeted interventions for high-risk areas:** Focused efforts, such as subsidizing radon testing and mitigation systems, in regions with high radon levels, to protect those at a higher risk. This promotes equity.
- **Integration with smoking cessation programmes:** Combine radon education with smoking cessation initiatives to address the combined risks of lung cancer from radon and tobacco smoke.

References

Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom of 5 December 2013 laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation

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