

# Radon myths and legends

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**Those working in the radon field find the same myths about radon coming up year after year. Here are a few:**

**Myth: Radon is only a problem in granite areas**

**Fact:** High radon levels are found on many different rock types around the country, including some limestones and sandstones

**Myth: Radon remedial measures cost tens of thousands of pounds**

**Fact:** Effective remedial measures usually cost less than a thousand pounds, comparable with many other household expenditures

**Myth: Radon causes leukaemia or other cancers**

**Fact:** There is clear evidence that radon causes lung cancer, but studies of the risks of other cancers have not demonstrated a risk from radon

**Myth: I don't need to test my house because the house next door was tested and had a low radon level**

**Fact:** Radon levels vary greatly from house to house – the only way to find out if there is a problem is to measure the radon level

**Myth: Radon levels are high in Cornwall, but the lung cancer rate is low, so radon cannot cause lung cancer**

**Fact:** Most lung cancers are caused by smoking and smoking rates were low in Cornwall, giving a low rate of lung cancer. But studies of people in Cornwall and Devon have shown that higher radon levels in houses are associated with a higher risk of lung cancer for people living in those houses.

**Myth: If you want to build a house in a high radon area, you need to measure the radon concentration in the ground first**

**Fact:** If radon preventive measures are installed when building a house, there is no need to measure radon in the ground first

**Myth: High radon levels are only found in affected areas**

**Fact:** Although the great majority of houses with radon problems are in radon affected areas, radon problems can occur almost anywhere

**Myth: Radon concentrations are higher downstairs because it is a heavy gas that sinks down**

**Fact:** Radon is always well-mixed with air, and is carried along with air movements. Concentrations are higher downstairs because that is where the radon enters, mixed with soil air.

**Myth: Radon remedial measures require floors to be dug up**

**Fact:** In most cases remedial measures can be installed under the building from outside.

**Myth: Houses with high radon levels are blighted**

**Fact:** High radon houses can be remedied and there is no evidence that radon has caused any housing blight

**Myth: Radon is good for you – there are radon spas in other countries**

**Fact:** The evidence from epidemiological studies shows that even radon exposures below the UK action level carry a risk of lung cancer

**Myth: Radon remedial measures are ugly or noisy**

**Fact:** Properly installed remedial measures are quiet and unobtrusive

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