

Is your house HAUNTED this Halloween?

Your home may be haunted by something even more frightening than ghosts or goblins, but what is it and why should it scare you?



You cannot see, taste, or smell radon but that doesn't mean that it isn't haunting your home and putting you and your loved ones at risk for contracting lung cancer.

Radon doesn't rattle chains or say, "Boo!" but it is the leading cause of lung cancer among people who have never smoked, taking the lives of about 21,000 Americans each year according to the EPA. Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas that is produced when uranium in the soil decays. The only way to know if the silent killer is present in your home is to test.

Over time, radon can actually change the DNA of the cells in your lungs and lead to lung cancer. In fact, it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States.

The dangers of radon have been published by scientists, doctors, and governments. The United States EPA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization, the Surgeon General, and countless others advocate the need to prevent exposure to radon gas. Even with the scientific proof, some people believe that information about radon is hocus pocus to support the radon mitigation and testing industry. In light of this, we are going to use a few freaky stories to scare you into taking action against radon.

STORY #1: DON'T SLEEP WITH YOUR MOUTH OPEN.

It has been a long day of yard work and chores around the house. You finally get around to rearranging the furniture in your bedroom and get everything positioned just right. After all the hard work you are ready for bed. You shower, turn out the lights and crawl under your comforter. Little do you know that earlier, when you moved the nightstand, you stirred something up. It starts as a tickle that you scratch on your leg but nonetheless you fade away into slumber. Gradually, the tickle moves up your side and around to your

chest. Slowly, it moves onto your neck, but you don't even notice it as you sleep with your mouth open. Dreaming, breathing deeply, the warmth from each exhale is the attraction. You breathe in as the black widow spider, with babies on her back, moves onto your lips and...

Radon is more dangerous than spiders.

- I'm even cringing after that one! We can't stand spiders, especially when doing radon mitigation in crawlspaces!
- According to "Animal-Related Fatalities in the United States—An Update" by Ricky L. Langeley, MD, MPH there were an estimated 66 deaths from spider bites between 1991 and 2001. If you compare the estimates by the EPA, more than 200,000 will people die from radon during a ten-year period in the U.S.
- This story was about a spider crawling into your mouth while sleeping, which is a freaky and disgusting thought indeed, but did you know that your highest exposure to radon gas each day is while you sleep at night? Radon is heavier than air and tends to be at higher concentrations the closer to the ground you are depending on the elevation of your bed. While you are lying there, you may be breathing higher amounts of radon for several hours each night without even knowing it. This invisible gas doesn't seem nearly as scary, but it is actually much more dangerous than those eight-legged creatures.

STORY #2: SOMETHING IS LURKING IN THE WATER.

You earned it. You take a much-needed vacation. It's time to hit the beach and relax after a hard year at the office. You decide to take a swim. You suddenly feel the sense that you are being watched. You hear a splash behind you, but only see a swirl in the water. Remembering the small cut you have on your leg, and thinking that it could be spreading a faint blood trail throughout the surrounding water, you begin to panic. Every movement of your body could be the trigger that causes the instinctual response for the shark's attack. Moving slower, it's difficult to keep your head above water as you look to the shore. It's too late...duh-dun....duh-dun.... duh-duh...duh-dun, duh-dun, duh-dun.

Radon is more dangerous than sharks.

- It is a scary thought to be attacked by a shark, but it's good to know that the chances are slim. According to National Geographic, there is only an average of 19 shark attacks per year and only one fatality every two years. That number is pretty low when considering the millions of people who swim in the oceans each year. Even with numbers so low, the thought may have crossed your mind at some point while bobbing in the deep blue sea.
- Comparatively speaking, 19 shark attacks are far less than the 20,000 plus lung cancer deaths in the United States from radon gas. But you will never see a horror movie about death by radon.
- Like sharks, radon can be in the water. Well water can contain this gas. When you drink it or release it into the air from running the shower or faucet, it can create a dangerous situation in your home.

STORY #3: THE DARK BASEMENT.

Tomorrow is the big day. You are planning on having family and friends over for a housewarming party. Working alone preparing the sides for the feast, you have an unsettling sense that someone or something is there with you.... You turn on some music, brush it off and continue with your preparations. You begin to arrange the table and realize that the place settings are still packed away in boxes down in the basement. When you were looking for homes to buy, you fell in love with this house but something just felt strange about the basement. It's dark and late at night, but you need to go downstairs so you can finish setting up for the party. You walk down the steps and try to turn on the hallway light but the switch isn't working so you hurry down the hall go and into the storage room where you turn on a light. The light is dim but you find the box that you're looking for. You grab the box and then you hear it, a faint whisper of your name. Was it your imagination? You quickly make your way out of the room and down the hallway. You look back and see the silhouette of a human. You run up the steps but now it's right behind you! SMACK, the box hits the stairs. The next day your family arrives to find nothing but an empty house and broken dishes on the stairs...

Radon is more dangerous than ghosts.

- I know many people, especially children, who are terrified to go down into the basement alone. There are horror stories, thriller movies, and campfire conversations about ghosts, ghouls, and haunted houses...but to this day there is no proof that they actually exist. All the while, there is something to truly be feared in basements. Basements are surrounded by soil from which radon gas can seep. Invisibly, it can creep into your bedrooms, exercise rooms, man-caves, and theater rooms, and you may not know until it's too late.

- While millions watch documentaries, read books and scare themselves into believing in ghosts, millions are skeptical of the dangers of radon gas. However, science has proven the danger of breathing in radon. 1 in 4 Missouri homes actually do have high radon levels, and more than 40% of homes in Illinois have elevated levels. No matter where you live, you should test for radon to determine whether or not you have an invisible house guest living amongst you and your family.

ARE YOU AFRAID YET?

Have any of these scare tactics worked? Hopefully, this article will provoke you to either test for it yourself with a radon test kit, hire a certified radon measurement provider, or suggest to your clients and loved ones that they test their homes. Fear not: radon mitigation systems will fix the problem. These systems create ventilation in the soil under the foundation and are usually priced less than \$1300 for most homes. Don't be afraid to buy a house if it has radon because all homes can be fixed. Whatever you do, don't dismiss this information as just another scare tactic because it could save your life. St. Louis Radon welcomes the opportunity to speak at real estate offices, HOAs, and PTA meetings. We can be reached at 636-200-2875 or stlradon.com.

**ST. LOUIS
RADON**
TEST & MITIGATION

**IS RADON
CREEPING
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WHILE YOU
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**WHY RISK IT?
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