

Search

- [Photos & Video](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Things to Do](#)
- [Hot Topics](#)
- [Subscribe to Newsday](#)
- [Login or register](#)

- [CARS](#)
- [JOBS](#)
- [REAL ESTATE](#)
- [PLACE AN AD](#)
- [MORE CLASSIFIEDS](#)
- [WEATHER](#)
- [OBITUARIES](#)
- [LONG ISLAND](#)
- [NEW YORK CITY](#)
- [NATION & WORLD](#)
- [AP NEWS](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [HIGH SCHOOLS](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [LIFESTYLE](#)
- [EXPLORE LI](#)
- [TRAVEL](#)
- [HEALTH & FITNESS](#)
- [OPINION](#)
- [COLUMNISTS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [TECHNOLOGY](#)
- [BLOGS](#)
- [PHOTOS & VIDEO](#)
- [NEWS TOOLS](#)
- [SERVICES](#)
- [OUR PROGRAMS](#)



Home > Entertainment > Home and Garden

Text size:

Granite, radon and radiation

BY PEGGY BROWN | peggy.brown@newsday.com
September 5, 2008

You might have heard of granite in the news recently - not for its beauty or practicality, but for its potential dangers.

With the increased popularity of granite in kitchens, there have been reports that some of these natural stones emit radon - a radioactive gas that can seep into the air but can be eliminated by ventilation - as well as radiation, which cannot. Both elements can cause cancer, and the U.S. Surgeon General has warned that "indoor radon" is the second-leading cause of lung cancer, after smoking.

Given the ubiquity of granite in new and redone kitchens across [Long Island](#), should you worry whether you and your family are being poisoned by your countertops?

Probably not, says Dave Ryan, a spokesman for the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) in Washington. But you should be concerned enough about radon to test for it.

Related links

- [Counter proposal](#)
- [Concrete countertops](#) **PHOTO**

Island because of the sandy soil.) "The really important issue is testing your air," said Ryan. "It's much more important than worrying about radon in countertops."

Ryan said that the EPA, which doesn't regulate indoor air quality, isn't logging complaints about granite countertops. It has done no studies itself and is not evaluating other studies, he said.

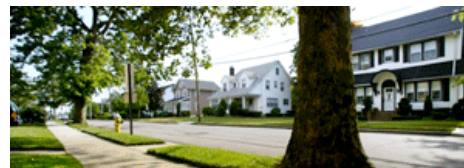
Some studies have been done, however. One scientist who is looking into the potential dangers of granite is William Llope, a senior faculty fellow at Rice University in Houston, who said he became curious about the matter when a TV station asked him to test granite counters in a kitchen. He did, using a gamma-ray spectrometer, which he says is more sophisticated than a Geiger counter, and was alarmed when he found radiation in five places on the countertop far higher than the normal "background" levels that surround people at all times. He said he is analyzing samples, some of which have excessive radon and radiation, and will be publishing his results.

"I don't want anyone to get the impression that granite is dangerous as a rule," said Llope. "Most stones that I've looked at are not what people would necessarily consider 'hot.' But there are some."

Not all granite is alike, he said. It comes from something like 60 countries and 1,000 providers. He urged people to test their granite.

The EPA recommends that everyone test their homes for excessive radon emissions, whether they have granite or not, since most radon comes from the soil. (Radon is not generally a problem on Long

Talk to us



What's the fanciest block on Long Island?
We're on the prowl, so send us your nominations.

View the Weekly Ad online ::

Popular stories

- [Most viewed](#)
 - [Most e-mailed](#)
 - [Hot topics](#)
- [Cops: Girl, 16, killed in Holtsville drunken driving crash](#)
 - [Allan Houston's coming back as a New York Knick?](#)
 - [A-Rod's slip of tongue indicts fading Yankees](#)
 - [Route 110 in Melville reopened after pedestrian accident](#)
 - [Police: Woman with kids in car arrested on DWI charges](#)
- [More most viewed](#)



PARTNERS

- [am New York](#)
- [Metromix](#)
- [Parents & Children](#)
- [Weddings](#)
- [Distinction](#)
- [Magazine](#)
- [Wellness](#)
- [FutureCorps](#)
- [Star Publishing](#)

A [New York](#) State Department of Health research scientist, Michael Kitto, has tested more than 50 stones. "Results indicate that many of the decorative stones are very low emitters of radon," he wrote. "A few stones emit slightly more radon, and only one stone in the study emitted a substantial amount of radon. While nearly all granites emit radon, the amount produced in a kitchen from the granite is less than in outdoor air."

There are inexpensive home radon testing kits available through the New York State Department of Health (518-402-7556 for \$6.75; up to eight weeks for delivery), or at stores such as The [Home Depot](#), where a kit by Pro-Lab in the plumbing aisle costs about \$15, not including lab analysis. Or you can purchase one online at [homestoreproducts.com](#) for \$39.95, including the lab fee.

If tests show a high level of radon, go to [epa.gov/radon](#), [buildclean.org](#), or call the National Safety Council's Radon Hotline at 800-767-7236 (RADON) 24 hours a day.

E-mail
Share
 Print
 Reprint

Related topic galleries: [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), [Television Industry](#), [New York, Regional Authority](#), [Environmental Politics](#), [Home Depot Incorporated](#), [Long Island](#)

[All topics](#)

[Get breaking news](#) | [Most popular stories](#) | [Dining and Travel deals all via e-mail!](#)

Copyright © 2008, Newsday Inc.

[Read 3 comments »](#)

Name

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



Post Comment

Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback.](#)



The Great Long Island Tomato Challenge 2008

Photos from this year's event, hosted by Newsday's Garden Detective, Jessica Damiano.

[Video coverage](#)

[Related News from the Web](#)

Powered by Topix.net

[amNY](#) | [Baltimore Sun](#) | [Chicago Tribune](#) | [Daily Press](#) | [Hartford Courant](#) | [LA Times](#) | [Orlando Sentinel](#) | [Sun-Sentinel](#) | [The Morning Call](#) | [The Virginia Gazette](#)

[New York News from amNY.com](#) | [Island Publications](#) | [Parents & Children](#) | [Weddings](#) | [Hamptons Travel Guide](#) | [Wellness](#) | [Metromix](#)

[CareerBuilder.com for Jobs](#) | [Cars.com for Autos](#) | [Apartments.com for Rentals](#) | [Homescape.com for Homes](#) | [Open Houses](#) | [Houses for Rent](#) | [FSBO](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Newsday](#) | [Terms of Service](#)