

## GRANITE COUNTERTOPS AND YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

- **Studies repeatedly show granite countertops pose NO health risk:** Repeated studies from respected scientists have come to the same conclusion: Radon emissions from granite countertops aren't even close to posing a health risk. While it's true that samples can vary and some samples can be more of a source of radiation than others – the highest emission rates ever reported in scientific literature result in concentrations that are hundreds of even thousands of times lower than the EPA's guidelines.
- **All kitchen countertops create emissions.** Virtually all countertop surfaces emit something, including chemicals, particles, radon and radiation. If the concentrations were high, they each could pose a health risk. But the fact is that all these emissions are tiny and all are diluted into household air. Think of it like painting a room. Paint emits chemicals that we can smell, and if we were to put our faces right up to the wall and breathe in a concentrated dose, it could be harmful. But those chemicals dilute in the air of a room. And the air in the room exchanges with air from other rooms, further diluting the emissions to where they pose no health risk to you or your family.
- **Radiation and radon are all around us. That's a fact of life.** Yes, it's scary to watch someone on TV waving a Geiger counter over a granite countertop and hearing it click loudly. It's scary, but it's also meaningless.
  - First, you cannot measure radon with a Geiger counter. And, the EPA says radon measurements should be performed to test the overall air quality of an entire home or structure – not just one emission source.
  - Second, you may not realize that the same clicking happens if you point a Geiger counter at your smoke detectors, your television, your computer, a bowl of Brazil nuts or potatoes on your kitchen table, cinder block walls in your garage, or even a lot of the glazed pottery you may have in your living room.

The thing to keep in mind is that radon, like radiation, is all around us. Half the background radiation an average American gets every year comes from radon, which comes from the earth. The rest comes from the sun, food, medicine and other products. But this only becomes a health risk if our exposure is concentrated and prolonged – and that's the part of the story that's been missing.

- **If you're concerned about radon in your home, the solution to radon is as simple as 1-2-3:** It is very easy to get your home tested for radon concentrations. Several national companies, including AirChek, Inc. ([www.radon.com](http://www.radon.com)), offer reliable test kits at low cost. Also, several specialists operate in cities across the country, who are able to check your home. Just make sure they follow EPA guidelines for testing, which require monitors to take readings over several days – even weeks, depending on the type of monitor. Do not allow anyone to tell you that a Geiger counter reading is a reliable measure of radon. If you opt to buy your own electronic monitor, the EPA says:
  - Install a radon detector in your home, following the manufacturer's instructions,
  - Make sure to regularly change the battery and
  - Ventilate your home if the detector finds radon at levels over 4 picocuries per liter.

## **ANSWERS TO CUSTOMERS' QUESTIONS ABOUT GRANITE COUNTERTOPS**

***Q: I was thinking about installing granite countertops in my home, but after reports I've seen (and/or read) recently, I'm having second thoughts. Are granite countertops safe?***

A: Yes. Many of the reports are based on questionable science and provide misleading information which is taken out of context. If you want to know the real truth about granite, check studies that have been conducted over the years by well-respected scientists and independent research organizations. Study findings have been consistent: radon emissions from granite countertops aren't even close to posing a health risk. In fact, one study looked at the granites used in about 85 percent of American countertop installations and found the most popular granite countertops pose no health threat to homeowners. It's true that samples can vary and some samples can be more of a source of radiation than others – but the highest emission rates ever reported in scientific literature result in concentrations that are hundreds of even thousands of times lower than the EPA's guidelines.

***Q: I'm nervous about my granite countertops. I want you to rip them out of my kitchen right now!***

A: You probably chose to have granite countertops in your home because they make your kitchen beautiful, they're practical and you know they'll last for decades. Be reassured that your granite countertops are every bit as safe as they are beautiful, practical and durable. Some of the media coverage has been disappointing because it does not report the whole story and reports some of the facts out of context. They show someone waiving a Geiger counter over a granite countertop and it starts clicking. It's definitely sensational – but totally meaningless. The plain fact is that radiation is all around us. Compared to the radiation levels of everyday things in our homes and neighborhoods, the radiation levels produced by granite countertops are miniscule. You may not realize that a Geiger counter will also click if you waive it over a smoke detector, many wristwatches, your television, your computer, a bowl of Brazil nuts or potatoes on your kitchen table, cinder block walls in your garage, or even many kinds of glazed pottery in your living room.

***Q: So, you deny that granite countertops can cause radiation and give me and my family cancer?***

A: The amount of radiation produced by the typical granite countertop is miniscule compared to things we have around our homes. None of the research studies of granite countertops has ever identified a single stone that poses any significant health threat. While it's true that samples can vary and some samples can be more of a source of radiation than others – the highest emission rates ever reported in respected scientific literature result in concentrations that are hundreds of even thousands of times lower than the EPA's guidelines.

***Q: Why would the media say that granite countertops are not safe if it isn't true?***

A: Unfortunately, the coverage has been based on questionable science that seems to be promoted by some parties who hope to benefit from consumer confusion or concern. The sad truth is that consumer fears benefit companies that manufacture synthetic countertops, two of which are funding some of the fear-mongering efforts, and by radon detection consultants, who will benefit through the sale of their services.

***Q: Why should I believe a word you say? You want to sell me a granite countertop!***

A: I won't deny that I'd love to sell you a granite countertop, but I would not sell you anything unless I was sure that you know that granite countertops are safe for you and your family. I have a home. I have a (wife/husband). And I have (# of children). Their health and safety means everything to me. We have beautiful granite countertops in our kitchen and we plan on keeping them around for a while.