



What is Radon?

Radon is a cancer-causing natural radioactive gas that you can't see, smell or taste. Its presence in your home can pose a danger to your family's health. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in America and claims about 20,000 lives annually. EPA has launched a new series of television, radio and print public service announcements encouraging people to test and fix their homes for radon. This is a good time to focus on testing and on fixing homes with a radon level of 4 pCi/L or more. *Heed the Surgeon General's warning. Take action now to reduce your family's risk of lung cancer from radon!*

Exposure to Radon Causes Lung Cancer to Non-smokers and Smokers Alike

Lung cancer kills thousands of Americans every year. The untimely deaths of Peter Jennings and Dana Reeve have raised public awareness about lung cancer, especially among people who have never smoked. Smoking, radon, and secondhand smoke are the leading causes of lung cancer. Although lung cancer can be treated, the survival rate is one of the lowest for those with cancer. From the time of diagnosis, between 11 and 15 percent of those afflicted will live beyond five years, depending upon demographic factors. In many cases lung cancer can be prevented; this is especially true for radon.

Studies Find Direct Evidence Linking Radon in Homes to Lung Cancer

Two studies show definitive evidence of an association between residential radon exposure and lung cancer. Two studies, a North American study and a European study, both combined data from several previous residential studies. These two studies go a step beyond earlier findings. They confirm the radon health risks predicted by occupational studies of underground miners who breathed radon for a period of years. Early in the debate about radon-related risks, some researchers questioned whether occupational studies could be used to calculate risks from exposure to radon in the home environment. "These findings effectively end any doubts about the risks to Americans of having radon in their homes," said Tom Kelly, Director of EPA's Indoor Environments Division. "We know that radon is a carcinogen. This research confirms that breathing low levels of radon can lead to lung cancer."