

# Division of Environmental Health



Article Name	North Carolina Health Officials Urge Citizens to Test for Radon
Article Author	Laura J. Leonard
Article Active	1/15/2008
Article Data	<p>Release: Immediate Date: Jan. 15, 2008</p> <p>Contact: Laura Leonard Phone: (919) 715-3204</p> <p>North Carolina Health Officials Urge Citizens to Test for Radon</p> <p>Radon gas exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers</p> <p>RALEIGH – Officials with the state Division of Environmental Health are supporting a nationwide campaign to recognize January as Radon Action Month and encourage people to learn more about exposure to the gas, the nation’s second leading cause of lung cancer deaths.</p> <p>Radon is a naturally-occurring, invisible, odorless and tasteless gas that is dispersed in outdoor air but can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Nearly 6 percent of homes in North Carolina have elevated levels of radon and about 20,000 deaths in the United States every year can be attributed to radon-related lung cancer. The gas also is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.</p> <p>“It is important to test your home for radon as radon gas poses a serious health risk,” said Terry L. Pierce, director of the Division of Environmental Health. “Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive, and radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors. It is the only way to determine if you and your family are being exposed to radon gas.”</p> <p>The N.C. Radon Program is offering free test kits throughout January to enable North Carolina homeowners to test their homes for elevated levels of radon. Residents involved in real estate transactions are encouraged to use certified testing professionals to test their homes. To receive a free test kit or find a list of certified professionals, go to the program’s Web site, <a href="http://www.ncradon.org">http://www.ncradon.org</a>.</p> <p>Although supplies are limited for the free test kits from the N.C. Radon Program, they can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores, directly from radon testing companies or through internet test kit distributors for \$25 or less.</p> <p>Radon gas in drinking water is also a health hazard, though a lesser concern than radon in indoor air. Radon gas from drinking water can combine with radon gas in indoor air to increase the concentration of gas to which a person is exposed.</p> <p>Radon in water is found in nearly all sources of surface water and groundwater. It is</p>

created by the radioactive decay of radium, a naturally occurring radioactive element found in underground rock formations, particularly granite and biotite. Therefore, homes supplied with drinking water from a private well or community water systems that use wells have a greater risk of exposure to radon in water.

For more information about radon or to request a free radon test kit, please visit the program's Web site at <http://www.ncradon.org>. You may also call Dr. Felix Fong, senior environmental radiation specialist, at (919) 571-4141, or Catherine Rosfjord, radon coordinator in western North Carolina, at (828) 274-1717. If you have questions about radon in water, please contact Fong at (919) 571-4141 or Ted Campbell, hydrogeologist with the Division of Water Quality's Asheville Regional Office, at (828) 296-4683.

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