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## **Oregon health officials urge testing homes for radon, a leading cause of lung cancer**

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Oregon state health officials are asking homeowners to test their dwellings for radon, an invisible odorless gas that can cause lung cancer.

The Oregon Department of Human Services Radon Program is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a nationwide campaign to educate Americans about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage them to protect their homes and families.

Naturally occurring radon is dispersed in outdoor air, but can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists have long been concerned about the health risk of radon and over the years there has been increasing proof that elevated levels of radon can cause lung cancer in humans.

The EPA estimates that radon is responsible for more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the U.S. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after smoking and is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers.

“Because radon is invisible and odorless, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes,” says Brett Sherry, Radon Coordinator in the Department of Human Services Public Health Division.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased at local hardware and home improvement stores or directly from radon testing companies. Many are priced under \$25. Radon problems can often be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common

home repairs such as painting or having a new water heater installed (anywhere from \$800 to about \$2,500).

The Oregon Department of Human Services urges residents to take action during this year's National Radon Action Month in January by testing their homes for radon. Radon poses a serious threat to our community's health but there is a straightforward solution. For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon resistant new construction, call DHS at (971) 673-0490 or visit our Web site at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/rps/radon/>, or the EPA Web site at [www.epa.gov/radon/nram/](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram/).

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