

# Cooperative Extension offers free radon test kits

by Marilyn Ming  
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*Winter the best time to test homes for cancer-causing gas*

Free, easy-to-use radon test kits are available December 1 through February 29 at University of Nevada Cooperative Extension offices and partner locations statewide. Radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas, comes from the ground and can enter homes and accumulate to elevated concentrations. At elevated concentrations, the odorless, colorless gas can raise the risk of lung cancer for unsuspecting homeowners.

Lung cancer kills more individuals than any other cancer and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates 21,000 Americans die each year from radon-caused lung cancer, killing more people than secondhand smoke, drunk driving, falls in the home, drowning or house fires. Once diagnosed with lung cancer, there is only a 15 percent five-year survival rate.

“A simple three-day test can determine if a house has a radon problem,” Susan Howe, director of the Nevada Radon Education Program, said. “The risk for radon-caused lung cancer is preventable by testing and fixing homes with radon problems. Winter is a peak time for radon accumulation in the home.”

In Nevada, one in four homes tested found radon concentrations at or above

the EPA action level of 4 picocuries per liter of air. According to experts, living in a home with radon concentrations at the action level poses a similar risk of developing lung cancer as smoking about half a pack of cigarettes a day.

Cooperative Extension, the EPA and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health urge all Nevadans to test their homes for radon. For more information or a list of free kit locations, visit the Nevada Radon Education Program website at [www.RadonNV.com](http://www.RadonNV.com) or call the Radon Hotline at 888-RA-DON10 (888-723-6610).

The Nevada Radon Education Program is a program of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and is funded by the EPA and the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health. The program has been working to raise awareness of the dangers of radon in the home since 2007. Since 2008, the program has distributed radon test kits and more than 21,000 homes have been tested in Nevada.

Nevadans are encouraged to take advantage of this free offer to test their homes for radon, as after February, kits will still be available but for a fee.

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**STATEWIDE PROBLEM** – Nearly 26 percent of homes tested in Nevada found radon concentrations at or above the EPA action level. For a radon potential map specific to each Nevada county, go to <http://www.unce.unr.edu/programs/sites/radon/results/>.

