

# OUR NEVADA

SECTION



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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

## *Radon is No. 1 cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers*

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There could be a radioactive gas in your home that causes lung cancer and you wouldn't even know it's there.



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Lung cancer kills more individuals than any other cancer and radon is estimated to cause 21,000 of those deaths each year in the U.S. Radon is a

deadly, naturally occurring radioactive gas that is a health issue in Nevada, as well as worldwide. Once diagnosed with lung cancer, there is only a 15 percent five-year survival rate.

Radon gas is the leading cause of lung cancer for those who do not smoke. Smokers who are exposed to elevated levels of radon have an even greater chance of getting lung cancer.

However, radon-caused lung cancer is preventable

through testing and mitigation.

Reducing the risk of radon-caused lung cancer can only happen through education, as Nevada lacks any protective statutes or regulations concerning radon.

University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Radon Education Program educates Nevadans about the radon health risk, how to test for and fix radon problems and distributes low-cost test kits to residents. The simple test can determine if a home has a ra-

don problem, a possible problem or no problem at all. If a radon problem is found, a minor home repair can reduce radon levels and lower the risk of lung cancer from radon.

Since 2008, with more than 18,649 Nevada homes tested, 26 percent (or one in four homes) of valid test results potentially had hazardous radon levels. The highest radon level in the state was found in Reno at 155.6 picocuries per liter of air (pCi/l). To put this measurement into perspective, the

Environmental Protection Agency recommends taking action if a home has a level of 4 pCi/l or higher. However, 4 pCi/l is not a safe level, as an average radon level of 4 pCi/l poses a similar risk of developing lung cancer as smoking half a pack of cigarettes a day according to experts.

Cooperative Extension also offers presentations to schools, civic and community groups, homeowner associations, Real-

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