

Lung Association: Elevated Levels of Cancer-Causing Radon Gas Detected in 25% of Virginia Homes

During January's National Radon Action Month, the American Lung Association urges all residents to test their home for radon, a leading cause of lung cancer.

Richmond – Radon remains the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States and the latest American Lung Association “State of Lung Cancer” report reveals that in Virginia, 25.2% of radon test results equal or exceed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level of 4 pCi/L. During January for National Radon Action Month, the Lung Association in Virginia strongly urges all residents to test their home for radon and take immediate steps to mitigate the threat if high levels are found.

Radon is a colorless, odorless and tasteless naturally occurring radioactive gas emitted from the ground. Radon can enter a home through cracks in floors, basement walls, foundations and other openings. Radon can be present at high levels inside homes, schools and other buildings. It is responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year and is the leading cause of lung cancer in people who have never smoked.

“Radon levels appear at dangerous levels in too many homes. High levels of radioactive radon gas have been found in every state, but too few proactively work to protect their homes and families from the potentially devastating effects of exposure,” said Deb Brown, Chief Mission Officer for the Lung Association. “Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in people in the U.S., and testing is the only way to know if your home is safe. The bright spot is that testing is easy, affordable and readily available at home improvement stores and through trusted online services.”

For National Radon Action Month, the Lung Association offers facts and tips to protect families from radon exposure:

1. Testing is the first step in reducing the risk of radon-induced lung cancer. Elevated levels of radon are found in homes in every state, and in some states, radon levels are elevated in as many as 1 in 3 homes. The only way to detect radon in a home is to test your home. Do-it-yourself test kits are simple to use and inexpensive. As a part of a partnership with Protect Environmental, the Lung Association is offering free radon test kits in select markets nationwide. Learn more and request a test kit [here](#).
2. Always test when buying a home. Testing for radon is always recommended when buying a home. Resources are available for new homeowners [here](#), and are available for real estate professionals [here](#).
3. Use test results to mitigate the risk. Radon is measured in picocuries per liter (pCi/L). The Environmental Protection Agency recommends taking action to reduce radon if levels are 4.0 pCi/L or greater, and to consider similar actions when the radon level is between 2.0 and 4.0 pCi/L.

The goal is to lower the radon level in your home to the lowest possible level. Contact your state radon program for a list of certified mitigation professionals in your state. Some state programs offer financial assistance or low interest loans for radon mitigation.

4. Your actions could save your family's lives. Beyond being the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S., radon exposure is the number one cause of lung cancer in people who have never smoked. Both smoking and radon can cause lung cancer, but exposure to both increases the risk by about 10 times. If you smoke and are ready to start your journey to quit for good, the Lung Association offers resources at Lung.org/quit-smoking.

To learn more about radon testing and mitigation, visit at Lung.org/radon and take the Lung Association's free Radon Basics course at Lung.org/radon-basics.

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About the American Lung Association

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, which has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and is a Platinum-Level GuideStar Member, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: Lung.org