



## Radon Testing on Vancouver Island

**Tasteless, Odourless, Colourless & Lethal:** Radon is a naturally occurring, cancer-causing gas that can seep into your home undetected.

The Canadian Cancer Society is organizing a radon testing project on Vancouver Island in the communities of: **Colwood, Gordon Head, and Nanaimo.**

### Why Test?

The Canadian Cancer Society believes people have the right to know if they are being exposed to cancer causing substances in their homes, workplaces or environment. This allows Canadians to make informed decisions and take actions that could impact their health.

Any home can have radon, and the only way to know is to test. Geological maps of uranium deposits demonstrate there is potential for elevated radon levels on Vancouver Island, although limited residential testing has been completed. The Canadian Cancer Society wants to identify radon levels to determine if there is a need for greater community education, action, or policy.

Radon is the *leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers* and Health Canada reports radon is responsible for an estimated 16% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada – approximately 3,200 people die from radon exposure each year.

With testing and specific building amendments, **exposure to high levels of radon can be prevented.** All homes can be fixed.

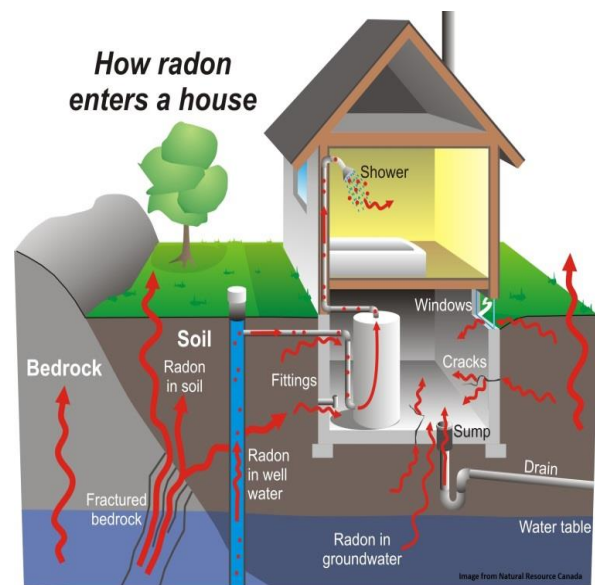
### What is Radon?

**Radon is a natural, radioactive gas** caused by the natural decay of uranium in rocks and soil. You can't taste it, smell it or see it.

Radon can enter a home or building through small cracks in foundation or air openings around joints, fittings and pipes. Outside radon is dissipated and is not a health concern. Inside, radon can build up into concentrated levels.

There is no known safe level of radon exposure and levels should be reduced as low as reasonably achievable. The following trusted and recognized health authorities recommend taking action to reduce radon levels if they *exceed* these amounts:

- Health Canada 200 Bq/m<sup>3</sup> (Bequerels per cubic metre)
- World Health Organization 100 Bq/m<sup>3</sup>





## Health Effects

Living in a home with high levels of radon for many years increases a person's risk for developing lung cancer. Those who are exposed and also smoke are at a much greater risk (6x in comparison to a non-smoker).

The longer a person is exposed and at higher levels, the greater the risk for developing lung cancer. Lung cancer can take many years to develop and there are no immediate symptoms after being exposed to radon.

## Our Project

The Canadian Cancer Society is conducting a testing project in the communities of Colwood, Gordon Head and Nanaimo, beginning September 2016 and ending February 2017.

We are looking for homeowners who want to voluntarily place a test kit in their home. The kit will be provided free of charge. We ask that participants fill out an associated survey and promise not to disturb the test kit during the testing period.

Testing is recommended for 3 months during the winter season (November- February) when indoor radon levels tend to be higher. 3 month do-it-yourself test kits will be distributed during the months of September and October 2016, and collected in February 2017.

The test kit can sit on a shelf or hang from a ceiling; it is safe and should not be a disturbance in your home.

Example of a radon test kit



## Radon Mitigation: Reducing High Levels

All homes can be fixed. The Canadian Cancer Society recommends consulting with a certified C-NRPP (Canadian National Radon Proficiency Program) professional. In 2015, the Canadian Cancer Society helped train more than 35 professionals across BC.

Find a professional in your area at: <http://c-nrpp.ca/find-a-professional>

Health Canada provides more information about reducing high levels. Visit: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/radiation/radon/index-eng.php>.

## How to Get Involved

For homeowners living in Colwood, Gordon Head, or Nanaimo: If you are interested in placing a test kit in your home please contact Christina McLean ([cmclean@bc.cancer.ca](mailto:cmclean@bc.cancer.ca)).

In order to participate, you must be willing to: Fill out a short survey, and keep the test kit in your home from October 2016-February 2017.

Visit [cancer.ca](http://cancer.ca) for more information about radon and environmental carcinogens.