

## Breath Test to Detect Most Common Cancers

A breath test could one day be used to detect four of the most common types of cancer, scientists believe.

Researchers in Israel have developed sensors that can spot chemical signs of lung, breast, bowel and prostate cancer in a person's breath.

They believe further work could lead to a cheap, portable "electronic nose" capable of diagnosing cancer at an early stage.

The team, from the Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, carried out tests on 177 volunteers, some healthy and others with different types of cancer.

Professor Abraham Kuten, who led the team, said: "This study shows that an 'electronic nose' can distinguish between healthy and malignant breath.

"(It) can also differentiate between the breath of patients with different cancer types.

These results are interesting and show that there is the potential to develop a single breath test to detect these cancers. Dr Lesley Walker, Cancer Research UK

"If we can confirm these initial results in large-scale studies, this new technology could become a simple tool for early diagnosis of cancer along with imaging.

"It could also be an easy way to assess and monitor the effectiveness of cancer treatment and detect relapses earlier."

The development, revealed in the British Journal of Cancer, has been welcomed by a leading British cancer charity, although it has urged a degree of caution.

Dr Lesley Walker, of Cancer Research UK, said: "It is important to say at the outset that this is a small study at a very early stage and much more research is needed.

"These results are interesting and show that there is the potential to develop a single breath test to detect these cancers.

"Strengthening the methods for early diagnosis of cancer as well as improved treatments will have a significant impact on cutting death rates."

