

FAQs About Radiation

According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Japan's nuclear emergency presents no danger to California. CDPH is working closely with our state and federal partners, including NRC, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, FEMA Region IX, and the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA).

California has a plan of response for radiological emergencies if one were to arise. Plans include the Nuclear Radiological Emergency Program and the National Response Framework.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Q. What's the risk for California from the current nuclear power emergency in Japan?**
A. At present, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) indicates Japan's nuclear emergency presents no danger to California.
- **Q. What is being done to test for radiation that might be coming or is present in the environment?**
A. Both Federal and State monitoring is ongoing and will be supplemented as needed.
- **Q. Does California have a plan in place to respond to a radiological emergency?**
A. CDPH has a plan for response to radiological emergencies, called the [Nuclear Emergency Response Plan](#).
- **Q. Does California stockpile supplies for such an emergency?**
A. California does stockpile emergency supplies, including potassium iodide (KI) tablets. Potassium iodide tablets are not recommended at this time, and can present a danger to people with allergies to iodine, shellfish or who have thyroid problems. Potassium iodide tablets should not be taken unless directed by authorities.
- **Q. Why are potassium iodide tablets used during emergencies involving radiation exposure?**
A. Potassium iodide tablets may be recommended to individuals who are at risk for radiation exposure or have been exposed to excessive radiation to block the body's absorption of radioactive iodine. Using potassium iodide when inappropriate could have potential serious side effects such as abnormal heart rhythms, nausea, vomiting, electrolyte abnormalities and bleeding.
- **Q. Should I be taking potassium iodide to protect myself?**

A. No. Potassium iodide tablets are not recommended at this time, and can present a danger to people with allergies to iodine, shellfish or who have thyroid problems.

- **Q. Should I purchase potassium iodide as a precaution?**

A. No. Potassium iodide is only appropriate within a very close proximity to a nuclear event. Using potassium iodide when inappropriate could have potential serious side effects such as abnormal heart rhythms, nausea, vomiting, electrolyte abnormalities and bleeding.

- **Q. Are there any protective measures I should currently take?**

A. The best thing anyone can do is to stay informed. CDPH and other state and federal partners are monitoring the situation. If circumstances change, officials will alert the public to appropriate precautionary procedures. But, again, at this time, the NRC reports Japan's nuclear emergency presents no danger to California.

For additional information:

CDPH Information Line: (916) 341-3947 Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time

CDPH Media Inquiries: (916) 440-7259, CDPHPress@cdph.ca.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636), Seven days a week, 24 hours a day
cdcinfo@cdc.gov

Other Resources

[CDC Information on Potassium Iodide \(KI\)](#)

[CDC Radiation Emergencies](#)

Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[NRC news releases](#)

Information from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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