

# Radiation Basics

Tips for Staying Safe During Radiologic Emergencies - Get Inside. Stay Inside. Stay Tuned.



## Get Inside

After a radiation emergency, get inside a building and stay there until officials tell you it is safe to leave.

**Shelter in Place:** After a radiation emergency you may be asked to stay inside for a long time. This is called sheltering in place. If outside, bring family members and pets inside and begin the decontamination process.

Follow these tips from the CDC:

- Close and lock doors and windows
- Turn off fans, air conditioners, and forced-air heating units that bring in fresh air from outside
- Close fireplace dampers
- Bring pets inside
- Move to an inner room or the basement
- Keep your radio tuned to the emergency response network or local news to find out what else you need to do

## Did you Know?

You can get rid of up to 90% of radioactive contamination by removing your clothing.

## Stay Inside

Contamination means that radioactive material may be on your body or clothing.

**Decontamination:** You can get rid of up to 90% of

radioactive contamination by removing your clothing.

- Take off your outer layer of clothing and seal in a plastic bag
- Wash yourself with soap and water
- Put on clean clothes

**Pets:** After a radiation emergency bring pets inside as soon as possible and confine them to one room until they have been decontaminated. After you decontaminate yourself and your family, wash your pet with warm water and soap. After washing your pet, wash your hands and face.



Hospital Decontamination Tent

**What happens if I am exposed to radiation?:** You may not have any health effects after being exposed to radiation. However, some people who are exposed to large amounts of radiation develop Acute Radiation Syndrome (ARS). Symptoms of ARS are:

- Fever
- Skin burns
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea

If you have these symptoms, seek medical attention right away.

## Stay Tuned

During any emergency it is important to stay tuned so that you can hear the latest information from local officials.

- Emergency officials will tell you if you need to leave your home (evacuate)
- You, your family, and your pets should stay inside until the evacuation order is given
- Officials will tell you when to go to an emergency shelter, where the shelter is located, and the safest route to take
- If you do evacuate, never leave any person or pet behind

## Other Information

### Should I Take Potassium Iodide?

Potassium Iodide (KI) pills are a medication made from the salt of stable iodine. Iodine is used by the body to make thyroid hormones. Most iodine in our bodies comes from the food we eat.

- KI pills only protect the thyroid
- KI pills only protect you from radioactive iodine, they do not protect you from any other radioactive materials
- You should only take KI pills if directed to do so by a medical or public health professional
- Do not use other forms of iodine as a substitute for Potassium Iodide pills

For more information about Potassium Iodide (KI) pills please visit: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/radiation/pdf/ki.pdf>.

### How Will I Know if Food and Water are Safe?

Follow these simple rules for eating and drinking after a radiation emergency:

- Drink only bottled water
- You can use tap or well water to clean yourself
- Eat foods that were already inside before the emergency
- Sealed or frozen foods and liquids may be used
- Rinse the outside of packages before opening them
- Rinse plates, pots and utensils before using them



Radiation Emergencies can be caused by a “dirty bomb” or a bomb used to spread radioactive materials.



The farther away you are from the radiation emergency the lower your exposure.



Lower your risk of sickness by limiting your radiation exposure time.

