

Around us all the time...



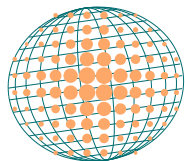
RADIATION

Since time began...

Estimate your personal

annual radiation dose.

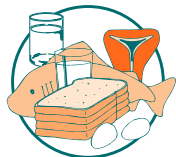
RADIATION FACTS



Radiation is around us all the time. It is as much a part of our everyday environment as the light and heat of the sun's rays. Scientists call this *background radiation* and measure it in units called *millirems*.



Earth has always been radioactive. In fact, the natural radioactivity in the environment is just about the same today as it was at the beginning of the Neolithic Age, more than 10,000 years ago.



The water we drink, the food we eat, the air we breathe – all contain radioactive elements that occur naturally and always have been on Earth.



People living in Denver (high elevations) get more cosmic radiation from the sun than people in Dallas (low elevations).



Television depends on radiation to form the picture, yet modern sets give off a barely detectable level of radiation.



There are many different kinds of radiation that can be both beneficial and harmful under some circumstances. For example, while none of us would be alive without radiant energy from the sun, excessive exposure can cause skin cancer.

RADIATION FACTS



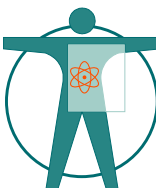
A person traveling on a transcontinental flight at an altitude above 33,000 feet receives about 3 to 5 millirems of radiation per trip. This is more than you would receive if you spent 24 hours a day at the gate house of a nuclear power plant for an entire year.



For most people, the biggest single source of man-made radiation exposure is medical tests.



Mother Nature's Reactor! In 1972, scientists found the remains of a natural nuclear reactor located in a uranium mine in Oklo, Gabon, Africa. Evidence shows that a nuclear chain reaction occurred in the mine 1.5 billion years ago.



A portion of each person's annual dose of radiation, about 40 mrems, comes from inside the human body. This results from the decay of naturally occurring radioactive atoms found in such elements as potassium contained in our bodies.



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Around us all the time...



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Estimate your personal annual radiation dose.

We live in a radioactive world – humans always have. Radiation is part of our natural environment. We are exposed to radiation from materials in the earth itself, from naturally occurring radon in the air, from outer space, and from inside our own bodies (as a result of the food and water we consume). This radiation is measured in units called millirems (mrems). The average dose per person from all sources is about 360 mrems per year. It is not, however, uncommon for any of us to receive far more than that in a given year (largely due to medical procedures we may undergo). International Standards allow exposure to as much as 5,000 mrems a year for those who work with and around radioactive material.

FACTORS	COMMON SOURCES OF RADIATION	YOUR ANNUAL DOSE (MREMS)
WHERE YOU LIVE	Cosmic radiation (from outer space) Exposure depends on your elevation (how much air is above you to block radiation). Amounts are listed in mrem (per year). At sea level.....26 mrem 2-3000 ft.....35 mrem 6-7000 ft.....66 mrem 0 - 1000 ft.....28 3-4000 ft.....41 7-8000 ft.....79 1-2000 ft.....31 4-5000 ft.....47 8-9000 ft.....96 5-6000 ft.....52 [Elevation of cities (in feet): Atlanta 1050; Chicago 595; Dallas 435; Denver 5280; Las Vegas 2000; Minneapolis 815; Pittsburgh 1200; St. Louis 455; Salt Lake City 4400; Spokane 1890.]	_____ mrem
	Terrestrial (from the ground) If you live in a state that borders the Gulf or Atlantic Coasts, add 16 mrem If you live in the Colorado Plateau area (around Denver), add 63 mrem If you live anywhere else in the continental US, add 30 mrem.	_____ mrem
	House Construction If you live in a stone, adobe, brick or concrete building, add 7 mrem	_____ mrem
	Power Plants If you live within 50 miles of a nuclear power plant, add 0.01 mrem If you live within 50 miles of a coal-fired power plant, add 0.03 mrem	_____ mrem
FOOD WATER AIR	Internal Radiation*** From food (Carbon-14 and Potassium-40) & from water (radon dissolved in water)	_____ 40 mrem
	From air (radon)	_____ 200 mrem
HOW YOU LIVE	Weapons test fallout (less than 1)*	_____ 1 mrem
	Jet Plane Travel	_____ .5 mrem per hour in the air
	If you have porcelain crowns or false teeth**	_____ .07 mrem
	If you wear a luminous wristwatch	_____ .06 mrem
	If you go through luggage inspection at airport	_____ .002 mrem
	If you watch TV*	_____ .1 mrem
	If you use video display terminal (computer screen)*	_____ .1 mrem
	If you have a smoke detector	_____ .008 mrem
	If you use a gas camping lantern	_____ .02 mrem
	If you wear a plutonium-powered pacemaker	_____ 100 mrem
MEDICAL TESTS	Medical Diagnostic Tests – Number of millirems per procedure X-Rays: Extremity (arm, hand, foot, or leg).....1 Dental.....1 Chest.....6 Pelvis/hip65 Skull/neck..... 20 Barium enema.....405 Upper GI.....245 CAT Scan (head and body).....110 Nuclear Medicine (e.g., thyroid scan).....14	_____ mrem
	YOUR ESTIMATED ANNUAL RADIATION DOSE	
	_____ mrem	

* The value is less than 1, but adding a value of 1 would be reasonable.

** Some of the radiation sources listed in this chart result in an exposure to only part of the body. For example, false teeth or crowns result in a radiation dose to the mouth. The annual dose numbers given here represent the "effective dose" to the whole body.

*** Average values.

Primary sources for this information are National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements Reports: #92 Public Radiation Exposure from Nuclear Power Generation in the United States (1987); #93 Ionizing Radiation Exposure of the Population of the United States (1987); #94 Exposure of the Population in the United States and Canada from Natural Background Radiation (1987); #95 Radiation Exposure of the U.S. population from Consumer Products and Miscellaneous Sources, (1987); and #100 Exposure of the U.S. Population from Diagnostic Medical Radiation (1989).

