

No Health Threat in LA County: Addressing Community Concerns about Radiation from Japan

1. What is radiation and how do you get exposed to it?

Radiation is a form of energy that's around us at all times. We're exposed to small amounts of radiation every day, from naturally occurring sources (like elements in soil) and man-made sources (such as medical x-rays). Radiation can also come from radiological accidents, like the one happening in Japan.

2. Will radiation from Japan affect L.A. County?

The radiation from Japan poses no health threat to children in LA County. Radiation from Japan is weakened because of the thousands of miles between Japan and California. There is no indication that radiation will reach harmful levels in LA County's air, food, or water.

The Department of Public Health, together with state and federal agencies, will continue monitoring, analyzing, and reporting radiation levels throughout LA County.

3. Should people take Potassium Iodide (KI)?

No. There are no signs that radioactive material, including radioactive iodine, will reach harmful levels in LA or neighboring counties. There is no need for or benefit to taking KI. Taking KI unnecessarily can cause harmful side effects or allergic reactions. Only public health officials and your doctor can safely determine whether you should take KI.

4. What can faith-based organizations do right now?

Recommendations for staff:

- Maintain organization's usual routines for activities, outreach and worship.
- Give members space and opportunity to express their feelings.
- Make time for updates and information sharing during activities/services.
- Be familiar with the organization's disaster and communication plans.
- Build or refresh emergency kits for their home, work, and car.

Recommendations for members:

- Make sure your organization has their current emergency contact information.
- Build emergency kits and develop a family communication plan. For more information, visit:
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eprp/media/index.htm>
- Build relationships with other members in the organization for assistance and support.
- Talk things out with family, friends and members of your organization for comfort and reassurance.
- Offer support to reputable charities that are assisting Japan.



Important Facts

1. There are no harmful radiation levels in LA County.
2. LA County's food, water, and air are safe.
3. You should NOT buy or take potassium iodide (KI) or other products to reduce risk from radiation exposure. It is not necessary and may be harmful.

Where can the public go for more information?

CA Dept. of Public Health:

(916) 341-3947

Available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Spanish and English

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

(800) CDC-INFO

(800) 232-4636, available 24/7

Food and Drug

Administration:

<http://www.fda.gov>