

PSR Statement on Radiation Exposure in the United States from the Japan Nuclear Accident

March 21, 2011

Topic: [Nuclear Power](#), [Safe Energy](#)

The unknown and changing situation in Japan regarding radiation releases is continuing to cause concern and confusion here in the United States. PSR National and our Chapters are receiving many questions regarding radiation effects and requests for medical advice. It is not possible for PSR to provide specific case-by-case medical advice. This should be given by individual health care providers and public health officials.

Currently, the primary public health risk from radiation exposure is to people closest to the plant site in Japan and in particular the workers. At this time, it is not known how much radiation may reach the US. It will depend on the amount of radiation released and how the wind blows. Given the long distance across the ocean between the US and Japan, much smaller amounts are likely to reach the US and will likely not require any special treatment. However, avoiding radioactively contaminated food and water is strongly recommended.

For those people who are close by and directly affected by the radioactive plume, protective measures include staying indoors, moving to safer areas, and having children, pregnant women and lactating mothers take potassium iodide (KI). Pregnant mothers should do this only in consultation with their physician. Patients with known thyroid disorders should also consult a physician.

At this time, we do NOT recommend that people in the US purchase or take potassium iodide (KI). We do not recommend further preventive measures at the present time. We will continue to monitor the situation as best we can.

Additional Information

[Potassium Iodide fact sheet](#) (CDC)

[FAQs About Radiation](#) (California Department of Public Health)

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As events in Japan continue to unfold, PSR is deeply concerned about the public health threat posed by the damaged nuclear reactors.

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