

# No Health Threat in LA County: The Facts 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 (like medical x-rays). Radiation can also come from nuclear accidents, like the one happening in Japan.

## 2. Does damage to the Japanese nuclear power plants pose a health risk to LA County?

No. Since California is 5,000 miles away from Japan, there will not be a significant increase of radioactive material in California's food, water, or air. As a result, damage to the Japanese nuclear power plants does not pose a health risk to Los Angeles County.

## 3. Should you take Potassium Iodide (KI)?

No. Because there are no harmful levels of radiation in LA County, residents should not take KI. Taking KI, if it's not needed, can be harmful to your health. KI can cause life threatening allergic reactions. Other side effects of taking KI include intestinal bleeding, nausea, rashes, and inflammation of the salivary glands. Only public health officials and your doctor can safely determine whether you should take KI.

## 4. Will radiation from Japan affect LA County's beaches?

No. Any radioactive particles in the ocean water near the damaged nuclear plants in Japan will dilute to extremely low levels before arriving in California's ocean water and are NOT a health concern to surfers, bathers or pets at LA County's beaches.

## 5. What can you do right now?

Follow the tips below to prepare yourself and your community:

- Visit: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eprp/media/index.htm>
- Create emergency plans that help you get in touch with loved ones during an emergency.
- Build emergency kits for your home, work, and car.
- Meet and build relationships with your neighbors.
- Identify and build relationships with community organizations such as neighborhood organizations, schools, and volunteer agencies in your area.
- Identify and build relationships with faith based groups such as churches, synagogues, and temples in your neighborhood.



### 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 of radiation exposure. It is not necessary and may be harmful.

### Where can you go for more information?

**CA Dept. of Public Health:**  
(916) 341-394,  
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>