



“Healthy People, Healthy Communities”

Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

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Mental Health ❖ Public Health ❖ Social Services

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Public Concern over Fallout Related to Nuclear Power Plant in Japan

According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), given the thousands of miles between the two countries, Hawaii, Alaska, the U.S. Territories and the U.S. West Coast are not “expected to experience any harmful levels of radioactivity.” However, in an effort to address any concerns that the public has about potential radiation exposure due to the recent Tsunami that hit Japan, we’d like the community to be aware that Mendocino County staff are continuing to receive up-to-date information.

In the event that radiation exposure is imminent, Public Health will declare a State of Emergency. In such an event we would work with the State Department of Public Health and local pharmacies to dispense Potassium/Iodide (KI). It’s been brought to our attention that people have or are attempting to stock up. It’s important to know more about Potassium/Iodide. For complete information about KI, go to [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/tsunamis/](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/tsunamis/)

We are not advising that anyone take precautionary measures at this time as there may be contraindications for certain populations.

The California Department of Public Health has set up a public information hotline to answer questions related to this topic. Please call (916) 341-3947.

## **Talking Points**

- According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Japan's nuclear emergency presents no danger to California. CDPH is monitoring the situation closely in conjunction with our state and federal partners, including NRC, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, FEMA Region IX, and the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA).
- California has a plan of response for radiological emergencies if one were to arise. Plans include the Nuclear Radiological Emergency Program and the National Response Framework.

## **Q&A**

### **Q. What's the risk for California from the current nuclear power emergency in Japan?**

A. At present, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) says Japan's nuclear emergency presents no danger to California.

### **Q. What are you doing to assess the risk?**

A. CDPH is monitoring the situation closely in conjunction with our State and federal partners.

### **Q. What resources does California have to tell if radiation is present in the environment?**

A. CDPH has a radiological branch and routinely tests air, water and the food supply.

### **Q. Does California have a plan in place to respond to a radiological emergency?**

A. CDPH has a plan for response to radiological emergencies, called the Nuclear Emergency Response Plan at [www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/environhealth/Documents/NERP/NERP.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/environhealth/Documents/NERP/NERP.pdf)

### **Q. Does California stockpile supplies for such an emergency?**

A. California does stockpile emergency supplies, including potassium iodide (KI) tablets, in the area around the southern nuclear power plant. Potassium iodide tablets are useful in blocking some types of radiation in the thyroid. Potassium iodide tablets are not recommended at this time, and can present a danger to people with allergies to iodine, shellfish or who have thyroid problems. Potassium iodide tablets should not be taken until/unless directed by authorities.

### **Q. Should I be taking potassium iodide (KI) to protect myself?**

A. No. Potassium iodide (KI) tablets are not recommended at this time, and can present a danger to people with allergies to iodine, shellfish or who have thyroid problems. Dosages can vary and should only be taken as advised by a medical professional.

This information can also be found on the CDPH website at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov)