

Breakdown of Natural Exposure Doses (Japanese)

Type of exposure	Breakdown of radiation sources	Effective dose (mSv/year)
External exposure	Cosmic rays	0.3
	Ground radiation	0.33
Internal exposure (inhalation)	Radon-222 (indoors and outdoors)	0.37
	Radon-220 (thoron) (indoors and outdoors)	0.09
	Smoking (Lead-210, Polonium-210, etc.)	0.01
	Others (uranium, etc.)	0.006
Internal exposure (ingestion)	Mainly Lead-210 and Polonium-210	0.80
	Tritium	0.000082
	Carbon-14	0.01
	Potassium-40	0.18
Total		2.1

Source: Prepared based on "Environmental Radiation in Daily Life (2011)," Nuclear Safety Research Association

This table shows that the intake of Lead-210 and Polonium-210 through ingestion accounts for a significant portion of Japanese people's internal exposures. Lead-210 and Polonium-210 are created when Radon-222 in the air goes through the following process:

Radon-222 (half-life of approx. 3.8 days) → Polonium-218 (half-life of approx. 3 minutes) → Lead-214 (half-life of approx. 27 minutes) → Bismuth-214 (half-life of approx. 20 minutes) → Polonium-214 (half-life of approx. 1.6×10^{-4} sec.) → Lead-210 (half-life of approx. 22 years) → Bismuth-210 (half-life of approx. 5 days) → Polonium-210 (half-life of approx. 138 days)

They are deposited on the ground or settled in rivers and oceans and are taken into the human body through foods.

One reason why Japanese people's exposure doses from foods are higher compared to the rest of the world is that their diets contain lots of fish, which is rich in Polonium-210. This accounts for Japanese people's large effective doses.

On the other hand, exposure to Radon-222 and Radon-220 (thoron) is smaller among Japanese people, and this is considered to be due to the fact that traditional Japanese houses are well ventilated and Radon-222 and Radon-220 (thoron) that seep indoors from the ground are quickly diffused outside.

Internal exposure to Radon-222 and Radon-220 (thoron) through inhalation will be explained in "Internal Exposure to Radon and Thoron through Inhalation" on p.71 of Vol. 1.

Tritium has smaller effects on the human body compared with other nuclides and exposure doses due to natural tritium are relatively small (p.57 of Vol. 1, "Conversion Factors to Effective Doses").

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