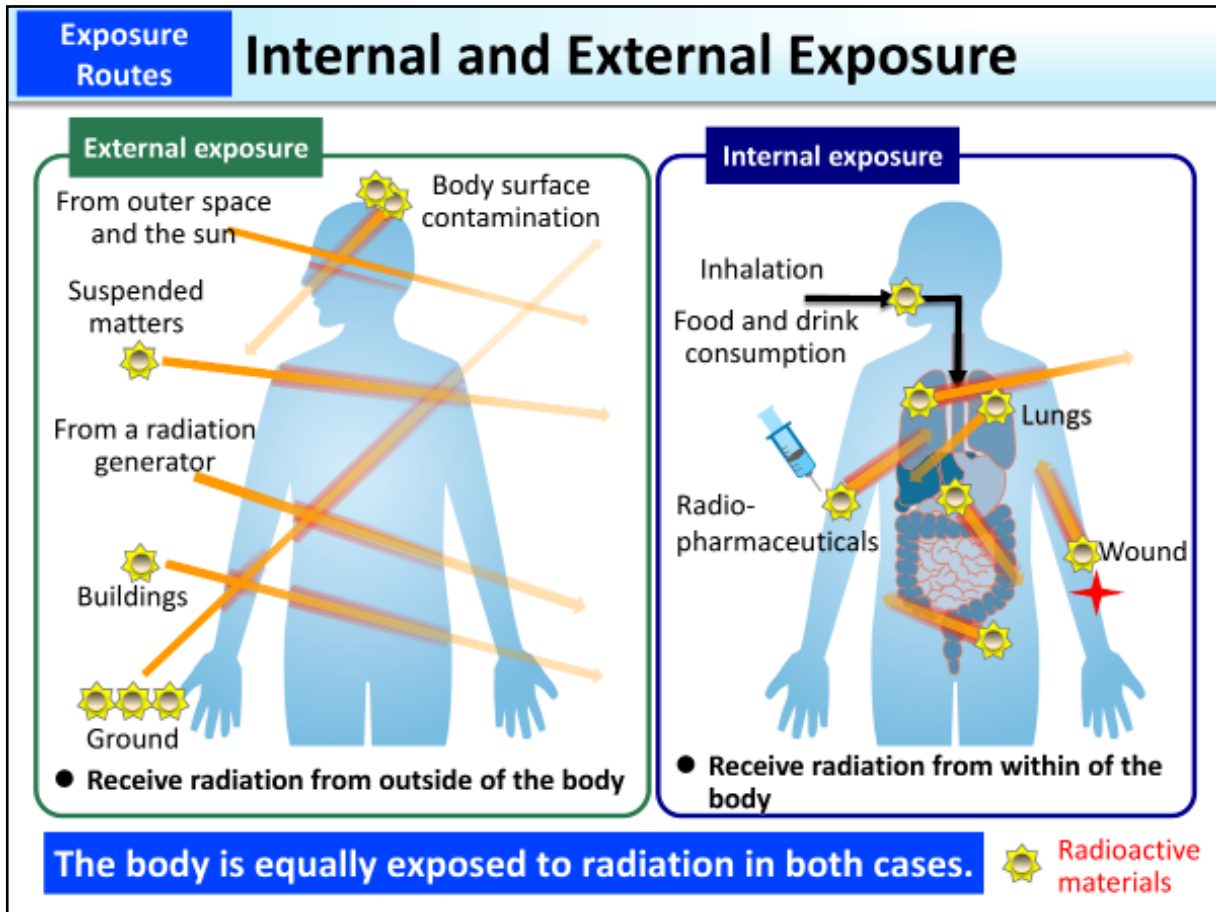




“Radiation exposure” refers to the situation where the body is exposed to radiation. There are two types of radiation exposure, “internal exposure” and “external exposure.”

External exposure means to receive radiation that comes from radioactive materials existing on the ground or in the air, or attached to clothes or the surface of the body (p.25 of Vol. 1, “External Exposure and Skin”).

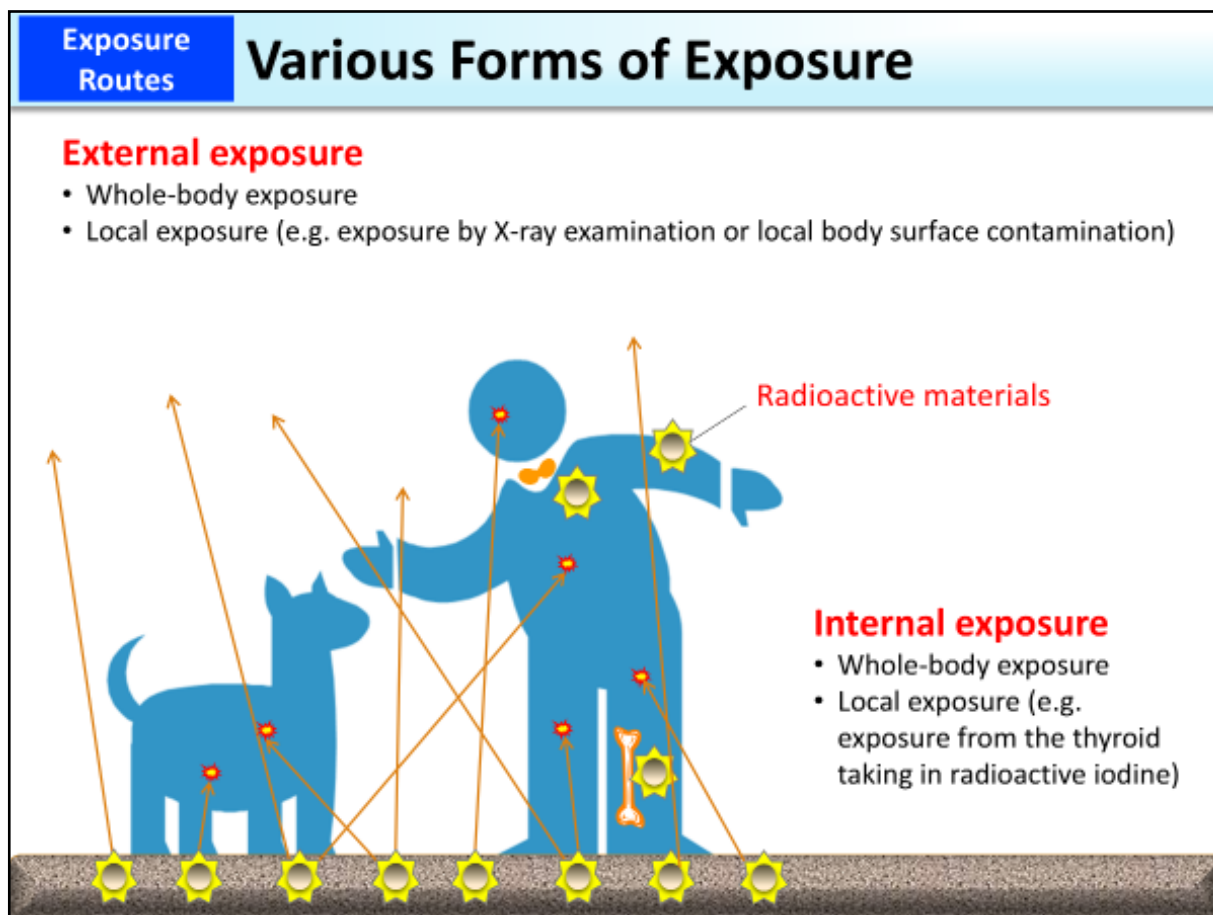
Conversely, internal exposure is caused (i) when a person has a meal and takes in radioactive materials in the food or drink (ingestion); (ii) when a person breathes in radioactive materials in the air (inhalation); (iii) when radioactive materials are absorbed through the skin (percutaneous absorption); (iv) when radioactive materials enter the body from a wound (wound contamination); and (v) when radiopharmaceuticals containing radioactive materials are administered for the purpose of medical treatment. Once radioactive materials enter the body, the body will continue to be exposed to radiation until the radioactive materials are excreted in the urine or feces or as the radioactivity weakens over time (p.26 of Vol. 1, “Internal Exposure”).

The difference between internal exposure and external exposure lies in whether the source that emits radiation is inside or outside the body. The body is equally exposed to radiation in both cases (p.24 of Vol. 1, “Various Forms of Exposure”).

The terms “internal exposure” and “external exposure” are used irrespective of types of radiation, i.e., naturally occurring radiation, accident-derived radiation or medical radiation (p.63 of Vol. 1, “Exposure Dose from Natural and Artificial Radiation”).

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Updated on March 31, 2019



To what extent the body will be affected by radiation exposure depends on the location and the extent of the exposure.

Whole-body exposure refers to exposure of the entire body to radiation, while local exposure refers to exposure of a part of the body to radiation.

In whole-body exposure, all the organs and tissues may be affected by the radiation, while in local exposure, the effects are, in principle, confined to the exposed organs and tissues. If any organ of the immune system or endocrine system is included in the part exposed, distant organs or tissues could be indirectly affected, but the main concern is basically with the effects on the exposed organs and tissues.

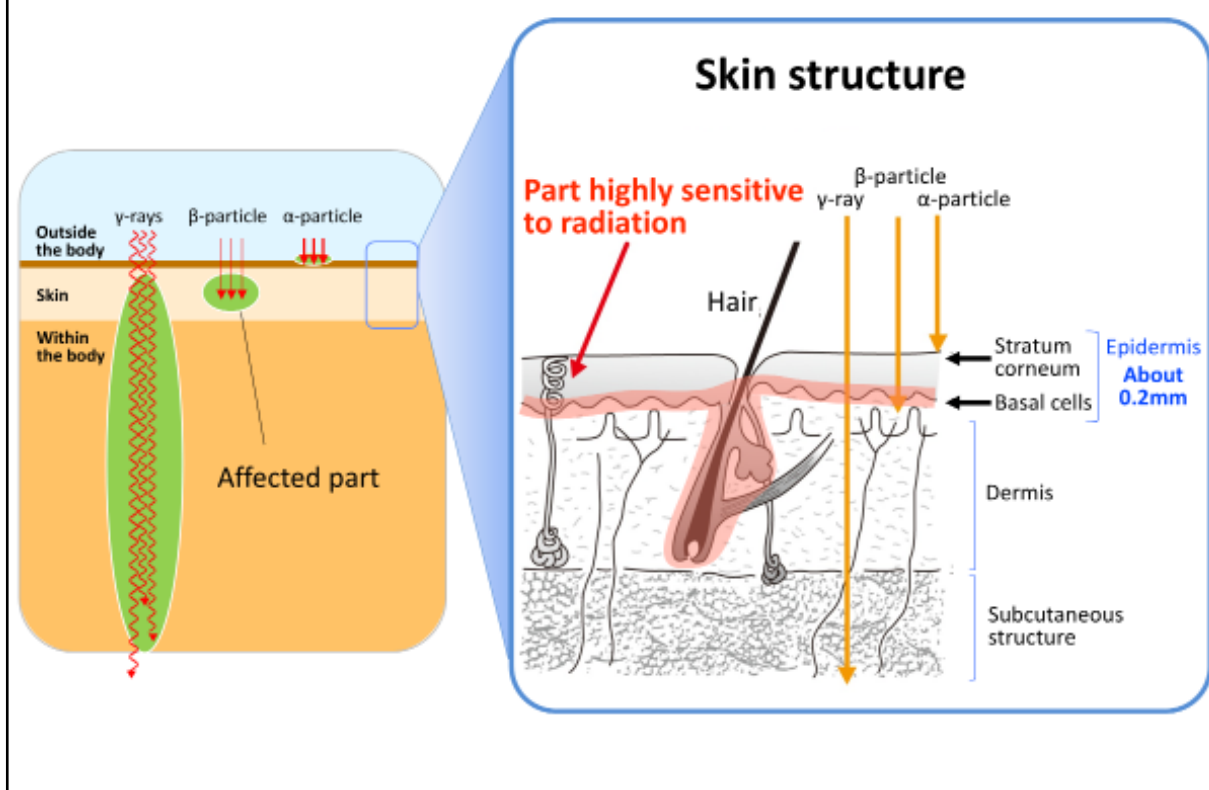
Organs differ in sensitivity to radiation. In local exposure, therefore, the extent of the effects varies greatly depending on whether the exposed part includes organs that are highly sensitive to radiation.

In internal exposure, organs and tissues where radioactive materials are likely to accumulate will receive high doses of radiation. If such organs and tissues that are prone to accumulation have high sensitivities to radiation, they are more likely to be affected by the radiation. In Belarus and Ukraine, after the Chornobyl NPS Accident, there was an increase in the number of thyroid cancer cases among children. It was due both to the tendency of radioactive iodine to accumulate in the thyroid and children's thyroids having a higher sensitivity to radiation than adults'.

(Related to p.4 of Vol. 1, "Types of Exposure")

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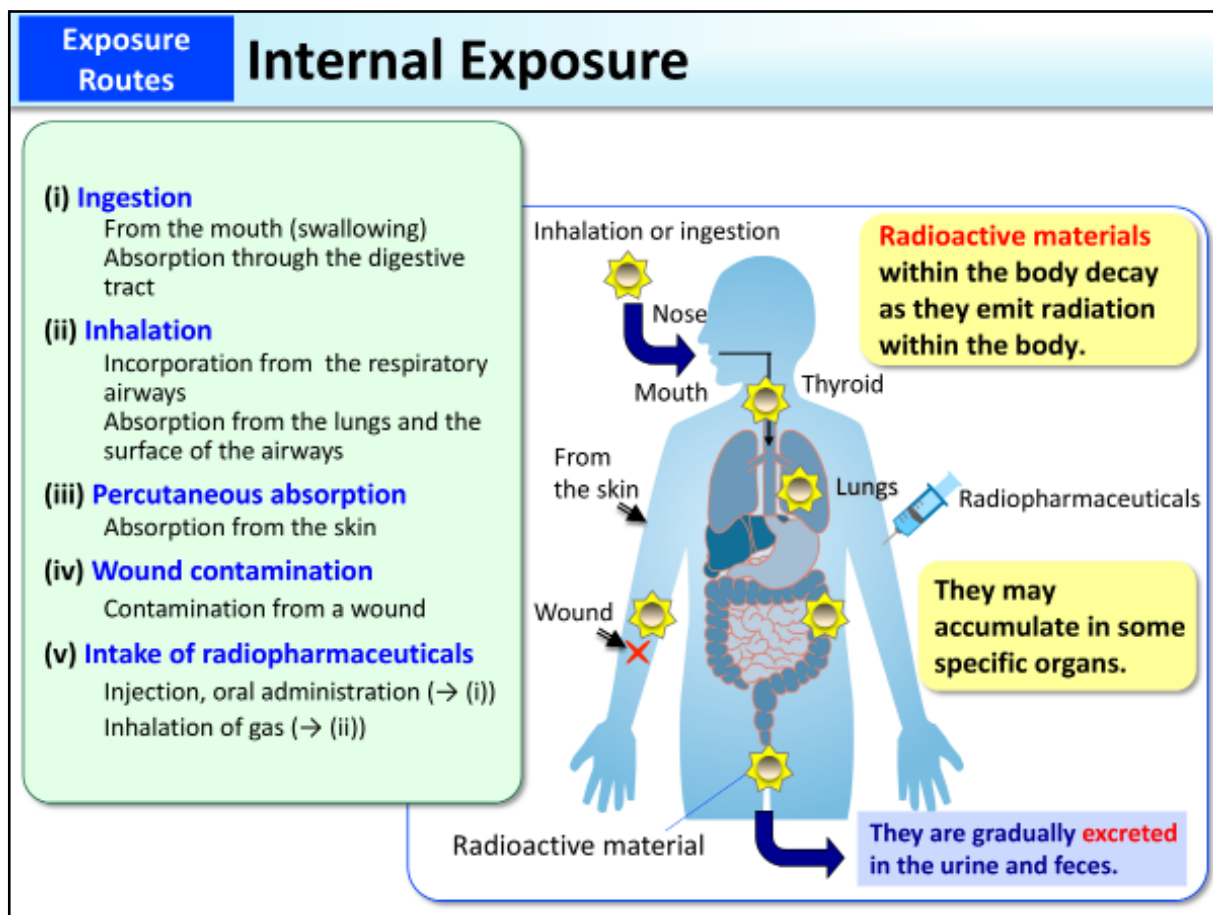


In external exposure, α (alpha)-particles having weak penetrating power stop at the epidermis and therefore do not produce any effects, but if a large amount of radioactive materials that emit β (beta)-particles adheres to the surface of the body for an extended period of time, they will affect the skin's basal cells and hair-root cells that have high sensitivity to radiation, possibly causing skin erythema that is characterized by reddening of the skin, hair loss, etc. However, such exposure is extremely rare, and the major problems with external exposure are associated with radioactive materials emitting γ -rays that affect the inside of the body.

(Related to p.21 of Vol. 1, "Penetrating Power of Radiation within the Body," and p.22 of Vol. 1, "Penetrating Power and Range of Effects on the Human Body")

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Internal exposure occurs due to radioactive materials being taken in the following routes: ingestion together with food (ingestion); incorporation while breathing (inhalation); absorption from the skin (percutaneous absorption); penetration from a wound (wound contamination), and administration of radiopharmaceuticals through injection, etc.

Radioactive materials incorporated into the body emit radiation within the body. Accumulation in some specific organs may occur depending on the types of radioactive materials.

This is largely due to the physicochemical properties of radioactive materials. For example, strontium, having similar properties to calcium, tends to accumulate in calcium-rich parts such as bones once it enters the body; cesium, because of its properties similar to potassium, tends to distribute throughout the body once it enters the body.

Iodine, being a constituent element of thyroid hormones, tends to accumulate in the thyroid, whether it is radioactive iodine or stable iodine (p.127 of Vol. 1, "Thyroid").

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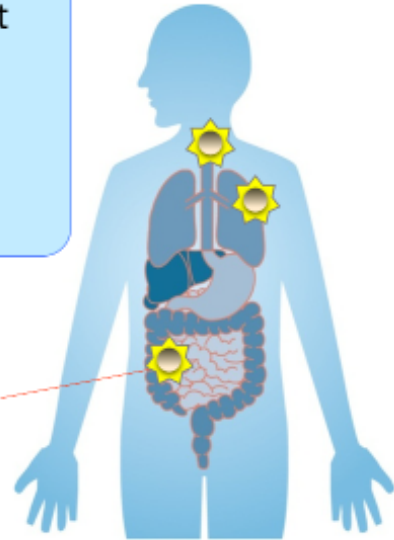
Exposure
Routes

Internal Exposure and Radioactive Materials

The characteristics of radioactive materials that especially cause problems in internal exposure

- (i) α -emitters > β -emitters or γ -emitters
- (ii) Materials that enter easily but are difficult to excrete
- (iii) Materials that are likely to accumulate in specific organs

Radioactive materials



Radioactive materials within the body disintegrate into other elements and are gradually excreted in the urine and feces through metabolism. The time required for radioactive materials to reduce to half by disintegration is called physical half-life (T_p), and the time required for radioactive materials within the body to reduce to half through metabolism is called biological half-life (T_b). Radioactive materials that enter the body decrease both through their physical half-life and biological half-life. The time required for such radioactive materials to reduce to half is called effective half-life (T_e), and the following relationship is found between T_p and T_b :

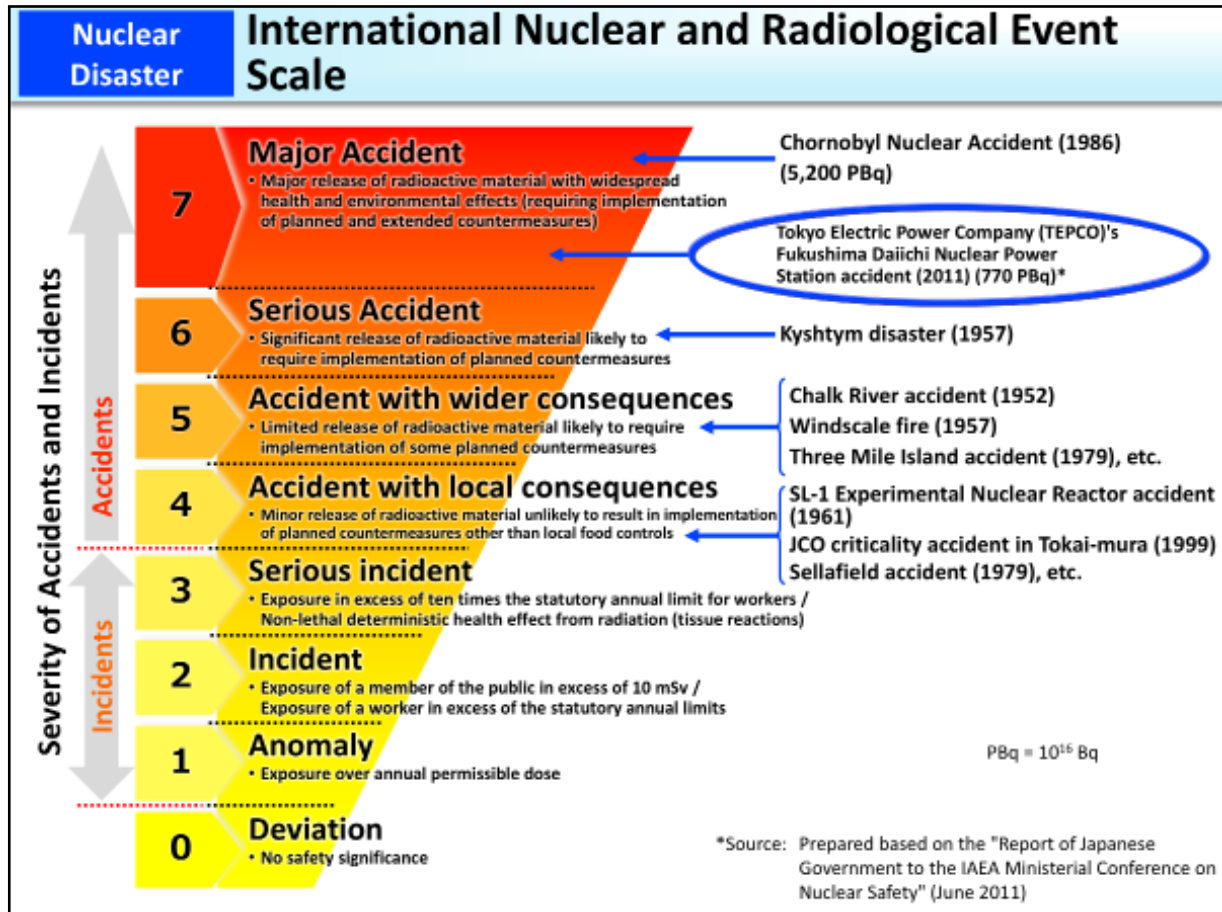
$$1/T_e = 1/T_p + 1/T_b$$

A major problem with internal exposure is caused by radioactive materials that have a long half-life and emit α (alpha)-particles. In terms of the chemical nature and element-specific biokinetic behavior, radioactive materials that are easily incorporated into the body but are difficult to be excreted, and also those that tend to be accumulated in particular organs/tissues cause problems as they result in increasing internal exposure doses.

Plutonium, which is not easily absorbed in the digestive tract, for example, could be a concern if taken into the lungs during inhalation rather than being taken into the body via food. It has been known that plutonium then enters blood vessels from the lungs and is transported by blood flow to bones and the liver, where it settles. Since plutonium emits α -particles within such organs, it could cause lung cancer, bone tumors or liver cancer.

Radioactive cesium, on the other hand, easily enters the body because of its properties similar to potassium but it also tends to be easily excreted. It does not accumulate in any specific organs but is taken in mainly in muscles. For adults, the time required for radioactive cesium that enters the body to reduce to half is said to be about 70 days (p.31 of Vol. 1, "Radioactive Materials Derived from Nuclear Accidents").

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The International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES) was established by the INES (the International Atomic Energy Agency) and the OECD/NEA (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Nuclear Energy Agency), and in 1992, all countries were recommended to formally adopt it.

Incidents and accidents at nuclear facilities are divided into seven categories according to their severity. Each country determines the severity of incidents or accidents using this scale and announces the results.

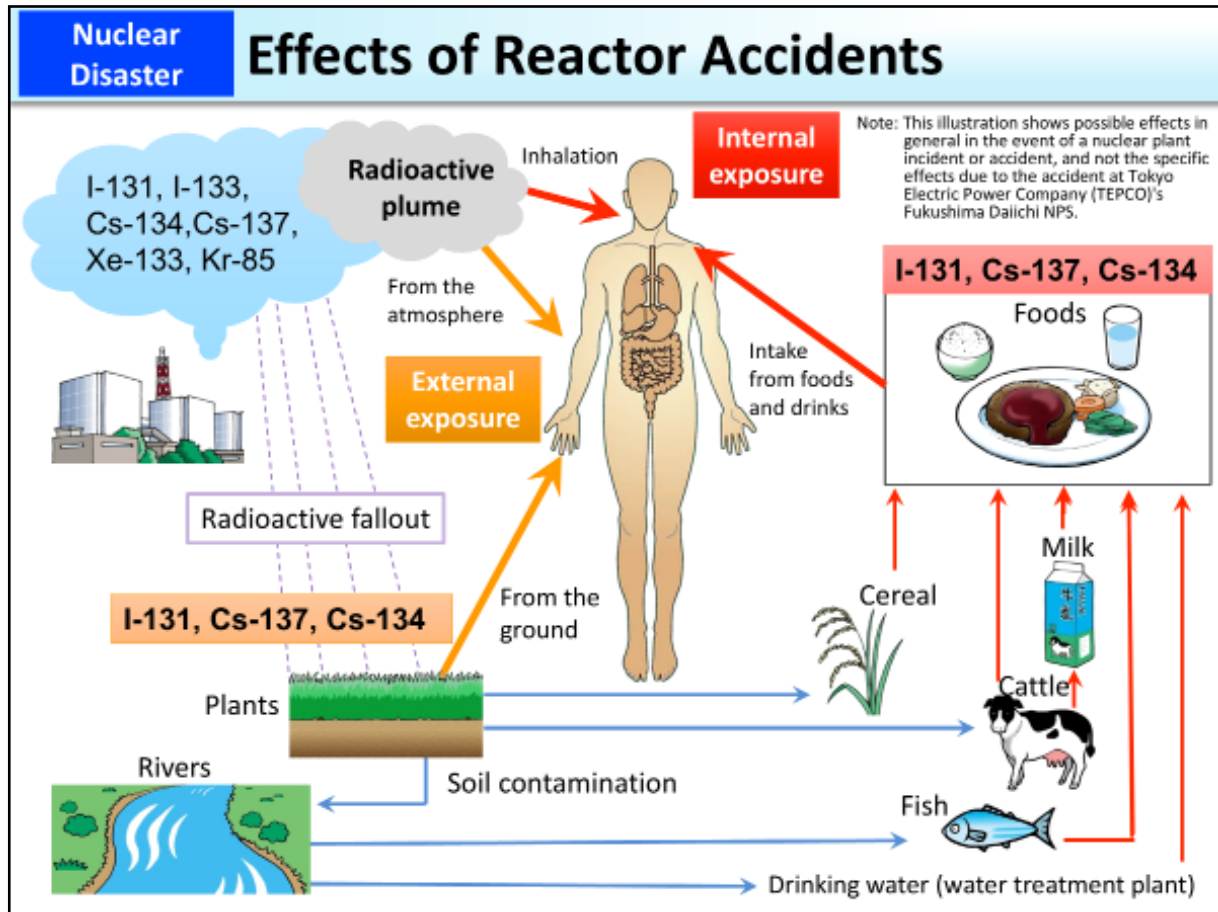
The accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS was provisionally rated Level 7, indicating that it was the most serious accident because of the amount of radioactive materials released.

(Related to p.8 of Vol. 2, "International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES)")

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Updated on March 31, 2024

Effects of Reactor Accidents



If an emergency happens in a nuclear facility and radioactive gas leaks, it flows into the atmosphere in a state called "plume." Plumes contain radioactive noble gases and aerosols (micro liquid droplets and particles), such as radioactive iodine and radioactive cesium.

When a plume passes overhead, people under it are externally exposed to radiation from radioactive materials contained therein. Additionally, people who inhale radioactive materials contained in the plume are also internally exposed to radiation.

Radioactive noble gases (krypton, xenon) are not deposited on the ground, and even if they enter the human body through inhalation, they do not remain in the body. However, aerosols, such as radioactive iodine and radioactive cesium, fall down gradually while a plume passes through and are deposited on the ground surface and plants. Therefore, external exposure from deposited radioactive materials may occur even after the plume has passed, and internal exposure may also occur if someone consumes contaminated drinking water or foods.

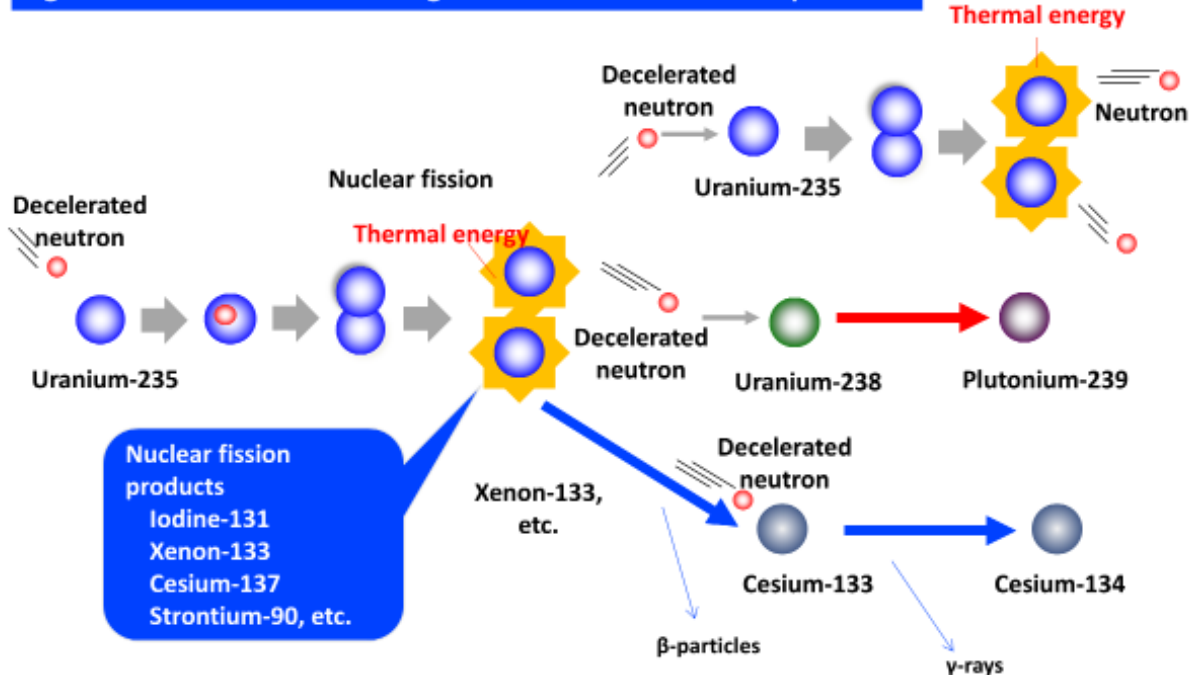
(Related to p.23 of Vol. 1, "Internal and External Exposure," and p.30 of Vol. 1, "Products in Nuclear Reactors")

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Products in Nuclear Reactors

Light-water nuclear reactor and generation of nuclear fission products



The light-water nuclear reactor is currently the most widely used type of reactor around the world (also used at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS). Bombarding enriched uranium fuel (Uranium-235: 3-5%; Uranium-238: 95-97%) with neutrons results in nuclear fission. Radioactive nuclear fission products such as Iodine-131, Cesium-137, and Strontium-90 are created in this process. When Uranium-238 is bombarded with neutrons, Plutonium-239 is created.

Cesium-134 is not created directly from the nuclear fission of Uranium-235. Through beta disintegration, Xenon-133 and the like, which are nuclear fission products, disintegrate into Cesium-133, and Cesium-133 then turns into Cesium-134 as decelerated neutrons are trapped.

As long as the reactor is working properly, these products remain in nuclear fuel rods and do not leak out of the reactor.

Nuclear facilities are equipped with a variety of mechanisms for preventing leakage of radioactive materials, but if they all stop functioning properly, radioactive leaks will occur.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

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Nuclear Disaster		Radioactive Materials Derived from Nuclear Accidents				
	H-3 Tritium	Sr-90 Strontium-90	I-131 Iodine-131	Cs-134 Cesium-134	Cs-137 Cesium-137	Pu-239 Plutonium-239
Types of radiation	β	β	β, γ	β, γ	β, γ	α, γ
Biological half-life	10 days ^{*1 *2}	50 years ^{*3}	80 days ^{*2}	70-100 days ^{*4}	70-100 days ^{*3}	Liver: 20 years ^{*5}
Physical half-life	12.3 years	29 years	8 days	2.1 years	30 years	24,000 years
Effective half-life (calculated from biological half-life and physical half-life)	10 days	18 years	7 days	64-88 days	70-99 days	20 years
Organs and tissues where radioactive materials accumulate	Whole body	Bones	Thyroid	Whole body	Whole body	Liver and bones

Effective half-life: Related to p.27 of Vol. 1, "Internal Exposure and Radioactive Materials"
 Effective half-lives are calculated based on values for organs and tissues where radioactive materials accumulate as indicated in the table of biological half-lives.
 *1: Tritium water; *2: ICRP Publication 78; *3: JAEA Technical Manual (November 2011); *4: Assumed to be the same as Cesium-137; *5: ICRP Publication 48

Four types of radioactive materials, Iodine-131, Cesium-134, Cesium-137, and Strontium-90, are the major concerns in relation to health and environmental effects of radioactive materials released into the environment due to the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS. While various other materials were also released, they are known to have shorter half-lives than these four types or have been released in negligible amounts (p.32 of Vol. 1, "Comparison of Estimated Amounts of Released Radionuclides between the Chornobyl NPS Accident and the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accidents").

Iodine-131 has a short physical half-life of about 8 days, but once it enters the body, 10-30% will accumulate in the thyroid (p.127 of Vol. 1, "Thyroid"). If this happens, the thyroid will continue to be locally exposed to β (beta)-particles and γ -rays for a while.

Two types of radioactive cesium, Cesium-134 and Cesium-137, are the major causes of contamination due to nuclear plant accidents. Cesium-137 has a long physical half-life of 30 years and continues to contaminate the environment for a long time. Since radioactive cesium has similar chemical properties to potassium, it will be distributed throughout the body, like potassium. The biological half-lives of cesium and iodine vary depending on the age of the person, and are known to become shorter, the younger the person is.

Strontium-90 has a long physical half-life, and once it enters the body, it accumulates in bones because of its chemical properties similar to calcium. Since it does not emit γ -rays, it is not as easy as in the case of Cesium-134 and Cesium-137 to detect where and how much it exists in the body. In a nuclear plant accident, Strontium-90 is also produced as a result of nuclear fission, though smaller in quantity than Cesium-134 and Cesium-137. Plutonium-239 and the like derived from the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS have also been detected, but detected amounts are almost equal to the results of the measurement conducted all over Japan before the accident (p.51 of Vol. 2, "Plutonium (Fukushima Prefecture)").

(Related to p.11 of Vol. 1, "Half-lives and Radioactive Decay," and p.30 of Vol. 1, "Products in Nuclear Reactors")

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013
 Updated on March 31, 2021

Comparison of Estimated Amounts of Released Radionuclides between the Chornobyl NPS Accident and the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accidents						
Nuclides	Half-life ^a	Boiling point ^b °C	Melting point ^c °C	Release into the environment: PBq [*]		TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS/ Chornobyl NPS
				Chornobyl NPS ^d	TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS ^e	
Xenon (Xe)-133	5 days	-108	-112	6,500	11,000	1.69
Iodine (I)-131	8 days	184	114	~1,760	160	0.09
Cesium (Cs)-134	2 years	678	28	~47	18	0.38
Cesium (Cs)-137	30 years	678	28	~85	15	0.18
Strontium (Sr)-90	29 years	1,380	769	~10	0.14	0.01
Plutonium (Pu)-238	88 years	3,235	640	1.5×10^{-2}	1.9×10^{-5}	0.0012
Plutonium (Pu)-239	24,100 years	3,235	640	1.3×10^{-2}	3.2×10^{-6}	0.00024
Plutonium (Pu)-240	6,540 years	3,235	640	1.8×10^{-2}	3.2×10^{-6}	0.00018

Ratio of radionuclides accumulated in the reactor core at the time of the accidents that were released into the environment

Nuclides	Chornobyl NPS ^f	TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS ^g
Xenon (Xe)-133	Nearly 100%	Approx. 60%
Iodine (I)-131	Approx. 50%	Approx. 2-8%
Cesium (Cs)-137	Approx. 30%	Approx. 1-3%

*PBq equals 10^{15} Bq.

Sources: a: ICRP Publication 72 (1996); b and c: Rikagaku Jiten 5th edition (1998); d: UNSCEAR 2008 Report, Scientific Annexes C, D and E; e: Report of Japanese Government to the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety (June 2011); f: UNSCEAR 2000 Report, ANNEX J; g: UNSCEAR 2013 Report, ANNEX A

This table shows a comparison between major radioactive materials released into the environment due to the Chornobyl NPS Accident and the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accident.

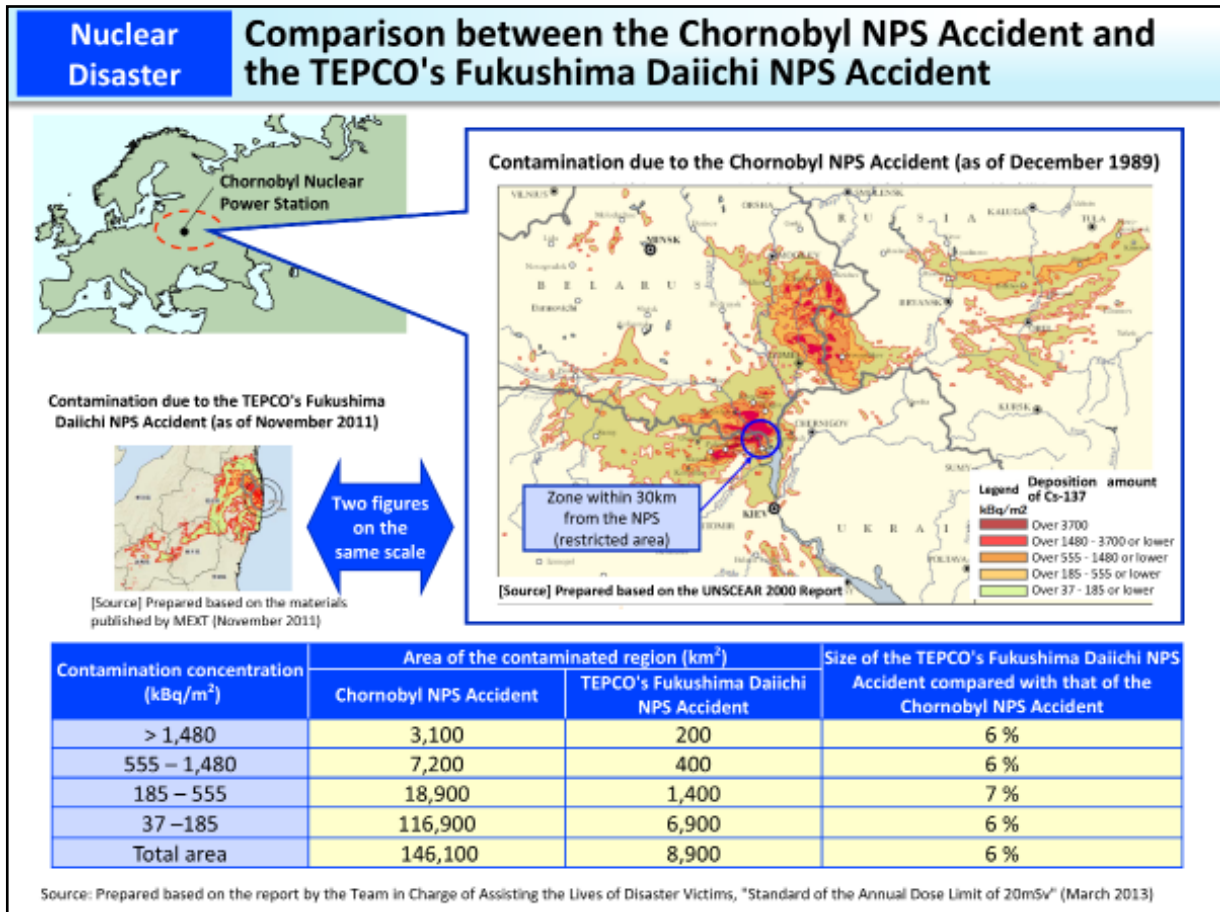
Among them, Cesium-134 and Cesium-137 are the major radionuclides that could pose health threats. The table shows the melting and boiling points of the respective nuclides.

Cesium has a boiling point of 678°C and is therefore in a gaseous state when the nuclear fuel is in a molten state (its melting point is 2,850°C). When cesium in a gaseous state is released into the atmosphere, it goes into a liquid state when the temperature drops below its boiling point, and it further becomes particulate at temperatures below its melting point of 28°C. Thus, cesium is mostly in a particulate form in the atmosphere and will be diffused over wide areas by wind. This was roughly how radioactive cesium was spread to distant areas in the Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accident.

Although it is difficult to directly compare the released amount between the Chornobyl NPS Accident and the Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accident, the larger amount released at the time of the Chornobyl NPS Accident is considered to have been partly due to the fact that the core exploded and was directly exposed to the atmosphere. In contrast, a relatively small amount was released from TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS as extensive destruction of the containment vessel was barely avoided, and this is considered to have reduced releases of radioactive materials.

However, some noble gases such as Xenon-133 that are easily released into the atmosphere are considered to have been released also from the reactors at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS at a high percentage (Fukushima Daiichi NPS: approx. 60%; Chornobyl NPS: up to 100%). The large power capacity (Fukushima Daiichi NPS: total of approx. 2,000,000 kW; Chornobyl NPS: 1,000,000 kW) and the large amount of noble gases remaining in the core at the time of the accident are considered to have caused the release of large amounts of noble gases from TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS.

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The above figures show the contaminated regions due to the Chornobyl NPS Accident as of December 1989 and those due to Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accident as of November 2011 on the same scale. The table shows areas of the contaminated regions shown in the figures.

The region affected by the Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accident is about 6% of that affected by the Chornobyl NPS Accident in terms of the total area contaminated with Cs-137. (Related to p.32 of Vol. 1, "Comparison of Estimated Amounts of Released Radionuclides between the Chornobyl NPS Accident and the TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accidents")

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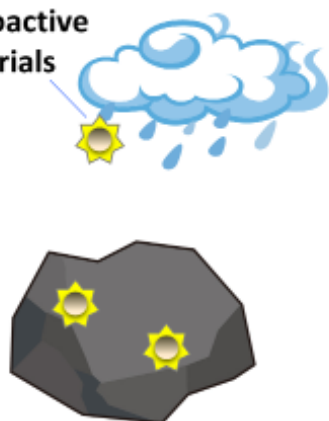
Becquerel and Sievert

Becquerel (Bq)

Unit indicating the amount of radioactivity

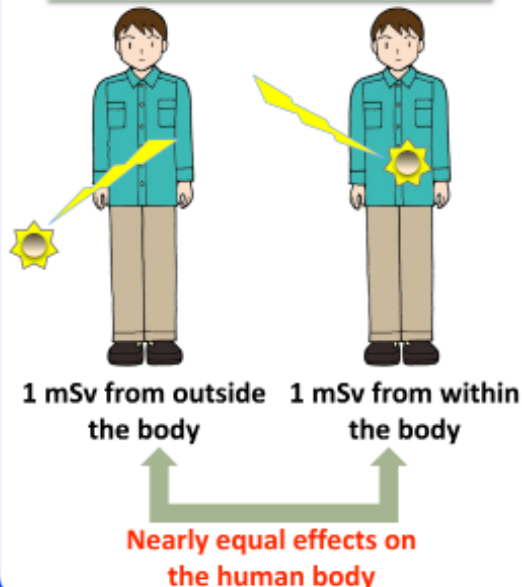
One nucleus decays per second =
1 becquerel (Bq)

Radioactive
materials



Sievert (Sv)

Unit of radiation exposure dose that a
person receives
Associated with **radiation effects**



“Becquerel” and “sievert” are the most common units of radiation. Becquerel is a unit of radioactivity and focuses on where radiation comes from. It is used to express the amount of radioactive materials contained in soil, foods, tap water, etc. The higher the value expressed in becquerels, the larger the radiation being emitted. Sievert is a unit of radiation exposure dose that a person receives and is used with regard to what is exposed to radiation, i.e. the human body. The larger the value expressed in sieverts, the larger the effects of radiation to which the human body is exposed (p.40 of Vol. 1, “Concepts of Doses: Physical Quantities, Protection Quantities and Operational Quantities”).

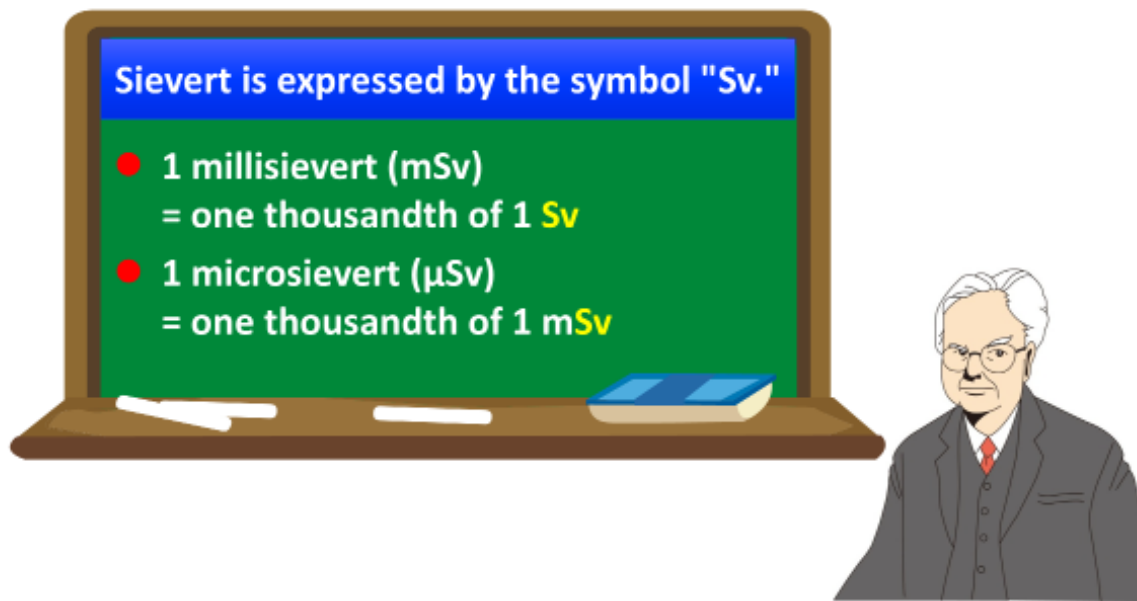
The extent of radiation effects on the human body varies according to the types of exposure, i.e., internal or external exposure, or whole-body or local exposure (for details, refer to Vol. 1, “2.1 Exposure Routes”), and according to the types of radiation (for details, refer to Vol. 1, “1.3 Radiation”). By using sieverts to express all types of exposure, it is possible to compare their effects on human body.

External exposure of 1 mSv and internal exposure of 1 mSv are deemed to have equal effects on the human body. Exposure to 1 mSv of radiation from outside the body and exposure to 1 mSv of radiation from within the body mean exposure to a total of 2 mSv of radiation.

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Origin of Sievert



Rolf Sievert (1896-1966)

Founder of the physics laboratory at Sweden's Radiumhemmet
Participated in the foundation of the International Commission on Radiological Protection

The unit “sievert” is named after Rolf Sievert, a Swedish researcher on radiological protection. He served as the chairman of the International X-ray and Radium Protection Committee (IXRPC), the predecessor of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP), and participated in founding the ICRP¹. Millisieverts (one millisievert = a thousandth of sievert) and microsieverts (one microsievert = a millionth of sievert) are mostly used to express radiation doses that people receive in their daily lives.

Becquerel (unit of radioactivity), curie (former unit of radioactivity) and gray (unit of absorbed dose) are all named after researchers who made significant contributions to the study of radiation.

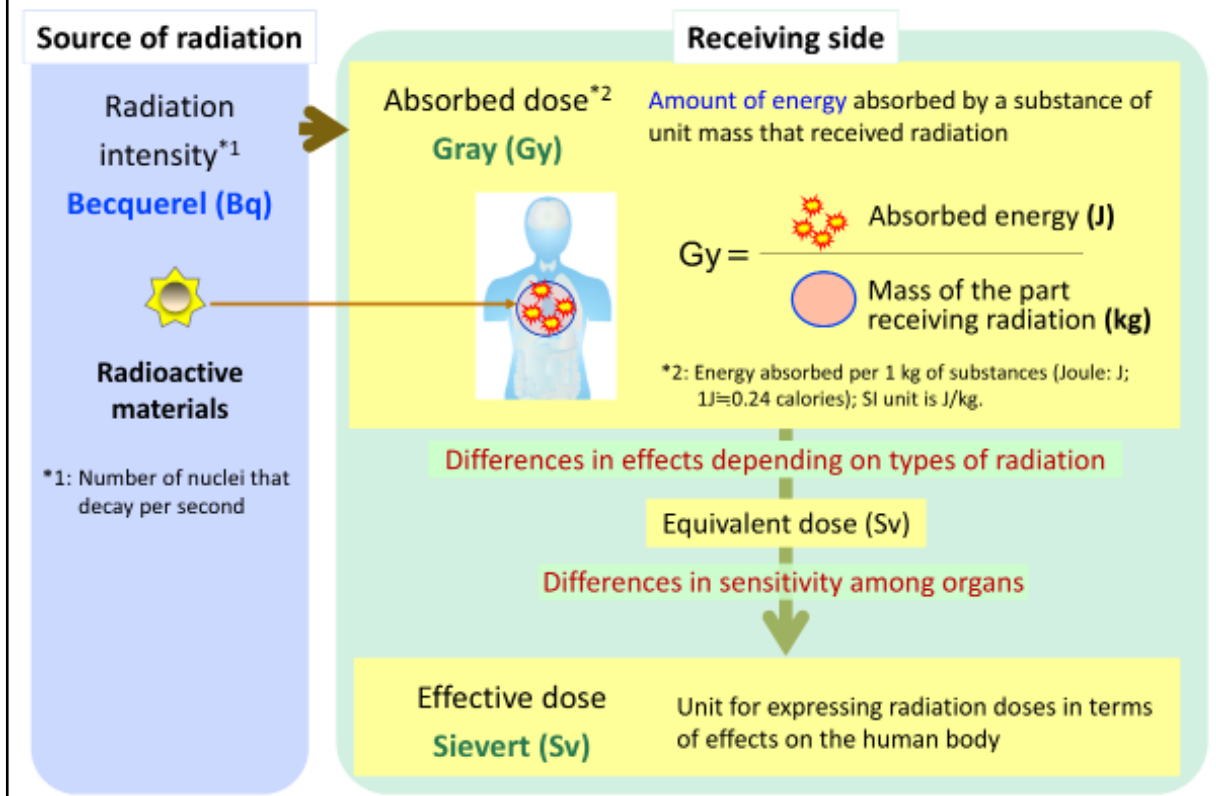
1. It is said that George Kaye at the National Physical Laboratory played a central role in founding the ICRP.

(Source: ICRP Publication 109, The History of ICRP and the Evolution of its Policies, ICRP, 2009)

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Relationship between Units



Units of radiation can be broadly divided into units for sources of radiation and units for the receiving side. Becquerel, a unit of radioactivity, is used for sources of radiation. Units for the receiving side are gray and sievert.

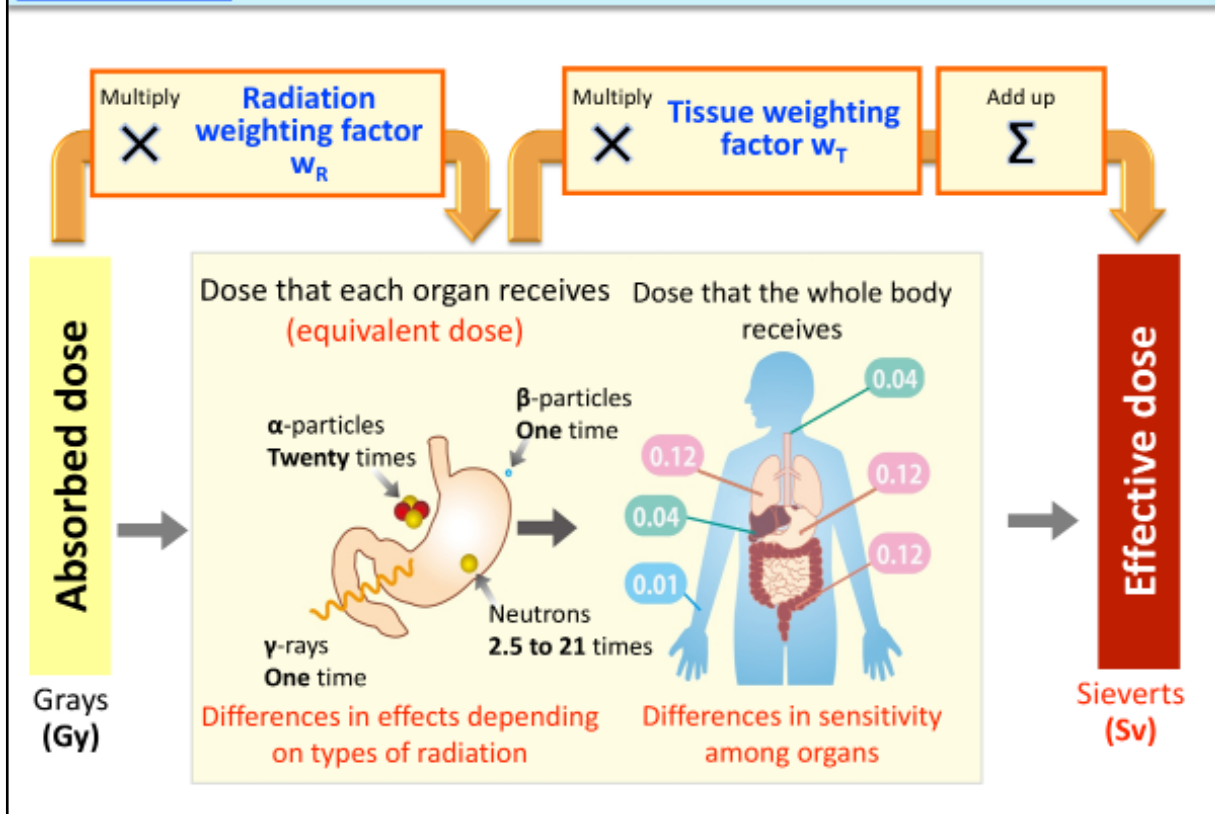
When radiation passes through something, its energy is absorbed there. Gray is a unit for indicating the absorbed dose.

The extent of effects on the human body varies depending on the types and energy quantities of radiation even if the absorbed doses are the same. Doses weighting health effects of respective types of radiation are equivalent doses (expressed in sieverts). The effective dose (expressed in sieverts) was developed for exposure management in radiological protection. In contrast to the equivalent dose, the effective dose weights differences in sensitivity among organs and tissues and sums them up to express the radiation effects on the whole body.

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Conversion from Gray to Sievert



To calculate the effective dose that expresses the effects of radiation exposure on the whole body, it is necessary to first determine the absorbed doses of individual tissues and organs exposed. The equivalent dose (expressed in sieverts) is obtained by multiplying the absorbed doses of individual tissues and organs by their respective radiation weighting factors (w_R) for taking into account the types of radiation. The value of the radiation weighting factor is larger for the types of radiation having larger effects on the human body (α (alpha)-particles: 20; β (beta)-particles and γ -rays: 1).

Once the equivalent doses for individual tissues and organs exposed to radiation are determined, they are then multiplied by the respective tissue weighting factors (w_T) for taking into account differences in sensitivity among organs, and the products are summed. The tissue weighting factors are for weighting the radiation sensitivity of individual tissues and organs. Any organ or tissue where radiation is likely to induce fatal cancer is given a higher factor.

The tissue weighting factors summate to 1. Thus, the effective dose can be considered as the weighted average of the equivalent doses of all organs and tissues. Effective doses can be calculated similarly for both internal and external exposures.

(Related to p.38 of Vol. 1, "Various Factors")

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Equivalent dose (Sv) = Radiation weighting factor w_R × Absorbed dose (Gy)

Type of radiation	Tissue weighting factor w_R
γ-rays, X-rays, β-particles	1
Proton beams	2
α-particles, heavy ions	20
Neutron beams	2.5~21

Effective dose (Sv) = Σ (Tissue weighting factor w_T × Equivalent dose)

Tissue	Tissue weighting factor w_T
Red bone marrow, colon, lungs, stomach, breasts	0.12
Gonad	0.08
Bladder, esophagus, liver, thyroid	0.04
Bone surface, brain, salivary gland, skin	0.01
Total of the remaining tissues	0.12

Sv: sieverts; Gy: grays

Source: 2007 Recommendations of the ICRP

Recommendations issued by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) in 2007 presented new radiation weighting factors and tissue weighting factors. It is stated that α (alpha)-particles have 20 times larger effects on the human body than γ-rays and β (beta)-particles with the same absorbed doses. Neutron beams are also given high radiation weighting factors and are expected to have 2.5 to 21 times larger effects on the human body than γ-rays and β-particles depending on the energy quantities (p.37 of Vol. 1, “Conversion from Gray to Sievert”).

A survey on the health effects of radiation on atomic bomb survivors revealed which organs and tissues are more prone to the cancer-causing effects of radiation (p.114 of Vol. 1, “Tissues and Organs Highly Sensitive to Radiation”). These tissues are assigned high tissue weighting factors.

Surveys on the health effects of radiation were also conducted on the children and grandchildren of atomic bomb survivors but no heritable effects of radiation were observed (p.109 of Vol. 1, “Chromosomal Aberrations among Children of Atomic Bomb Survivors”). Therefore, the ICRP lowered the tissue weighting factor for the gonads from 0.2 in the 1990 Recommendations to 0.08 in the 2007 Recommendations. In this way, the factors used in the calculation of effective doses are updated to accommodate new findings.

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$$\text{Effective dose (sievert (Sv))} = \sum (\text{Tissue weighting factor} \times \text{Equivalent dose})$$

When the whole body is
evenly exposed to
1 mGy of γ -ray
irradiation

Effective dose =

0.12 X **1** (mSv): bone marrow
+ **0.12** X **1** (mSv): colon
+ **0.12** X **1** (mSv): lungs
+ **0.12** X **1** (mSv): stomach
:
+ **0.01** X **1** (mSv): skin
= **1.00** X **1** (mSv)

= 1 millisievert (mSv)



When only the head is
exposed to **1 mGy** of γ -ray
irradiation

Effective dose =

0.04 X **1** (mSv): thyroid
+ **0.01** X **1** (mSv): brain
+ **0.01** X **1** (mSv): salivary gland
+ **0.12** X **1** (mSv) X **0.1**: bone marrow (**10%**)
+ **0.01** X **1** (mSv) X **0.15**: skin (**15%**)
:

= 0.07 millisieverts (mSv)



Methods for calculating an effective dose when the whole body is evenly exposed to 1 mGy of γ -ray irradiation and an effective dose when only the head is exposed to 1 mGy of γ -ray irradiation are compared.

Since the radiation weighting factor (W_R) for γ -rays is 1, the whole body being evenly exposed to 1 mGy means that the whole body is evenly exposed to 1 mSv (1 gray $\times$ 1 (W_R) = 1 millisievert). That is, equivalent doses are 1 mSv for all organs and tissues. To calculate effective doses, the equivalent doses for individual tissues are multiplied by their respective tissue weighting factors and the products are summed. Bone marrow, colon, lungs, stomach and breasts are given a high factor of 0.12 because these are organs with high risks of radiation-induced fatal cancer. The skin of the whole body is assigned a factor of 0.01. Thus, when the equivalent doses for all organs and tissues are multiplied by their respective tissue weighting factors and the products are summed, the result is an effective dose of 1 millisievert.

If only the head is exposed to 1 mGy in radiation inspection, the organs and tissues in the head, such as the thyroid, brain and salivary gland, are entirely exposed to radiation, so equivalent doses are 1 mSv for all these organs and tissues. For organs and tissues that are only partly present in the head, such as bone marrow and skin, equivalent doses are obtained by multiplying by the ratios of their areas exposed to radiation (bone marrow: 10%; skin: 15%). When their equivalent doses are multiplied by their respective tissue weighting factors and the products are summed, the result is an effective dose of 0.07 mSv.

(Related to p.36 of Vol. 1, "Relationship between Units")

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2015

Physical quantities: directly measurable**Radiation intensity (Bq: becquerels)**

Number of nuclei that decay per second

Radiation fluence ($\text{s}^{-1}\text{m}^{-2}$: fluence)

Number of particles incident on a unit area

Absorbed dose (Gy: grays)

Energy absorbed per 1 kg of substances

Irradiation dose (for X-rays and γ -rays) (C/kg)

Energy imparted to 1 kg of air

Doses indicating the effects of exposure on humans: not directly measurableDefined based
on physical
quantity**Protection quantities****Equivalent dose (Sv: sievert)**

indicates effects on individual human organs and tissues

Effective dose (Sv: sievert)

indicates effects on the whole body by combining effects on individual organs and tissues

Operational quantities**Ambient dose equivalent (Sv: sievert)**

Directional dose equivalent (Sv: sievert)

Approximate value for protection quantity used in environmental monitoring

Personal dose equivalent (Sv: sievert)

Approximate value for protection quantity used in personal monitoring

To control radiation effects on the human body, it is necessary to take into account the effects of exposure on multiple parts of the body and the effects of previous exposures. The equivalent dose and the effective dose were invented for that purpose.

The equivalent dose is obtained by weighting effects on individual organs and tissues according to the types of radiation.

The effective dose is obtained by converting the effects on individual tissues to a value for the whole body. It is not the simple average of equivalent doses for individual organs but the result of weighting according to differences in sensitivity to radiation among organs.

A factor for weighting radiation effects on individual organs is called the tissue weighting factor.

Thus, protection quantities are calculated based on doses for organs and tissues in the human body. They are therefore different from physical quantities such as the radiation intensity (unit: becquerel) and absorbed dose (unit: gray) and cannot be measured directly with instruments. To indicate effects on the human body, operational quantities are defined.

Some survey meters use sieverts in their readings. They do not directly measure a protection quantity but show approximate values defined based on measured physical quantities, i.e., operational quantities. Operational quantities include the ambient dose equivalent used in environment monitoring and the personal dose equivalent used in personal monitoring (p.41 of Vol. 1, "Dose Equivalents: Measurable Operational Quantities for Deriving Effective Doses").

To provide conservative (on the safe side) estimates of protection quantities, operational quantities are defined to assume slightly larger numerical values than the values of protection quantities in most cases.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

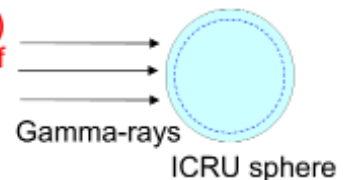
Updated on March 31, 2017

Dose equivalent = Absorbed dose at a reference point that meets certain requirements $\times$ Quality factor

To substitute for "effective doses" that cannot be actually measured, "operational quantities" that can be measured as conservative values or as nearly the same values as effective doses, such as an ambient dose equivalent and personal dose equivalent, are defined under certain conditions.

Ambient dose equivalent (1cm dose equivalent)

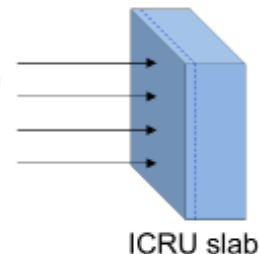
Dose equivalent is a dose that would be produced at a depth of 1 cm from the surface of an ICRU sphere, which is 30 cm in diameter and simulates human tissue, placed in a field where radiation is coming from one direction; Ambient dose equivalent is used in measurements of ambient doses using survey meters, etc.



Personal dose equivalent (1 cm dose equivalent)

Dose equivalent at a depth of 1 cm at a designated point on the human body; Since measurement is conducted using an instrument worn on the body, exposure from all directions is evaluated while a self-shielding effect is always at work.

$\Rightarrow$ Personal dose equivalents are always smaller than survey meter readings!



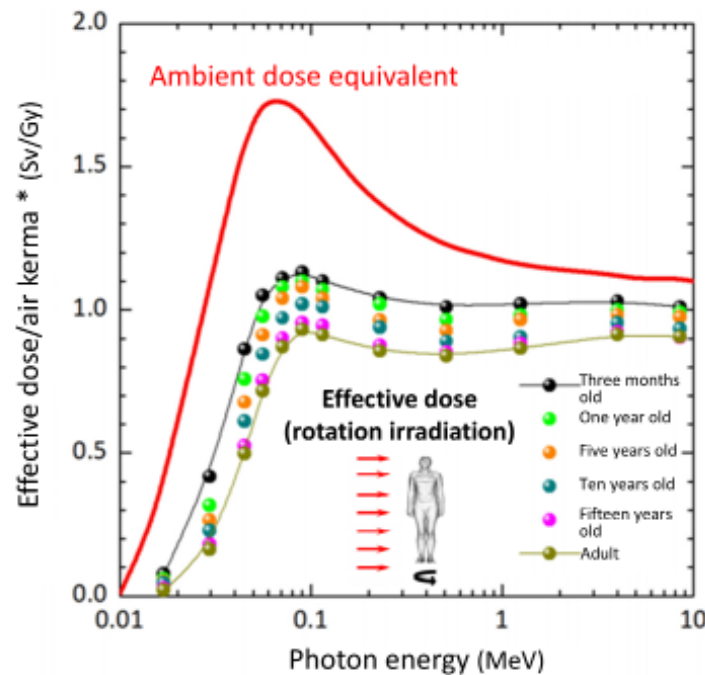
Operational quantities for approximating effective doses that cannot be actually measured (p.40 of Vol. 1, "Concepts of Doses: Physical Quantities, Protection Quantities and Operational Quantities") are defined, such as the ambient dose equivalent $H^*(d)$ (d is depth) for evaluating ambient doses in a work environment, etc., the personal dose equivalent $H_p(d)$ for evaluating personal exposure, and the directional dose equivalent $H'(d, \alpha)$ (α is the angle of incidence) as a quantity for use when there is a need to evaluate the depth and directions of incidence as well, as in the case of exposure of the lens of the eye to β -particles or soft X-rays.

Generally, both the ambient dose equivalent and the personal dose equivalent are also called 1 cm dose equivalents because a depth of 1 cm is used in the case of exposure to γ -rays.

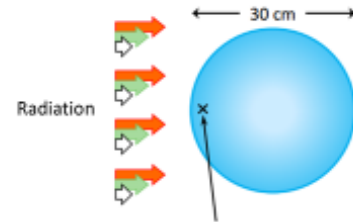
However, while the ambient dose equivalent is measured using measuring instruments that are less affected by directivity, such as a stationary ionization chamber and a survey meter, the personal dose equivalent is measured using a small personal dosimeter worn on the trunk of the body, so incidence from the back is evaluated while a self-shielding effect is always at work. Therefore, in the case of exposures only from the front direction, such as exposures in laboratories, the ambient dose equivalent and the personal dose equivalent are equal, but in the case of exposures from all directions, personal dose equivalents are always smaller than the values measured with a survey meter, etc. Calculation of an effective dose for incidence from all directions is made under the condition of "rotational irradiation" in which the human body is rotated, and the calculated value will be exactly the same as the personal dose equivalent. In other words, the calculated value will generally be larger than the effective dose.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2017

Updated on March 31, 2021



* Air kerma is a unit of physical quantity.



The ambient dose equivalent measured with a survey meter is defined as the dose equivalent at a depth of 1 cm from the surface of an ICRU sphere that is 30 cm in diameter. The ambient dose equivalent is also called 1 cm dose equivalent.

Source: Partially revised material 1 for the 9th meeting of the Atomic Energy Commission of Japan in 2012 (a report by Akira Endo of JAEA)

The ambient dose equivalent measured with a survey meter is set to always indicate a larger value than the effective dose.

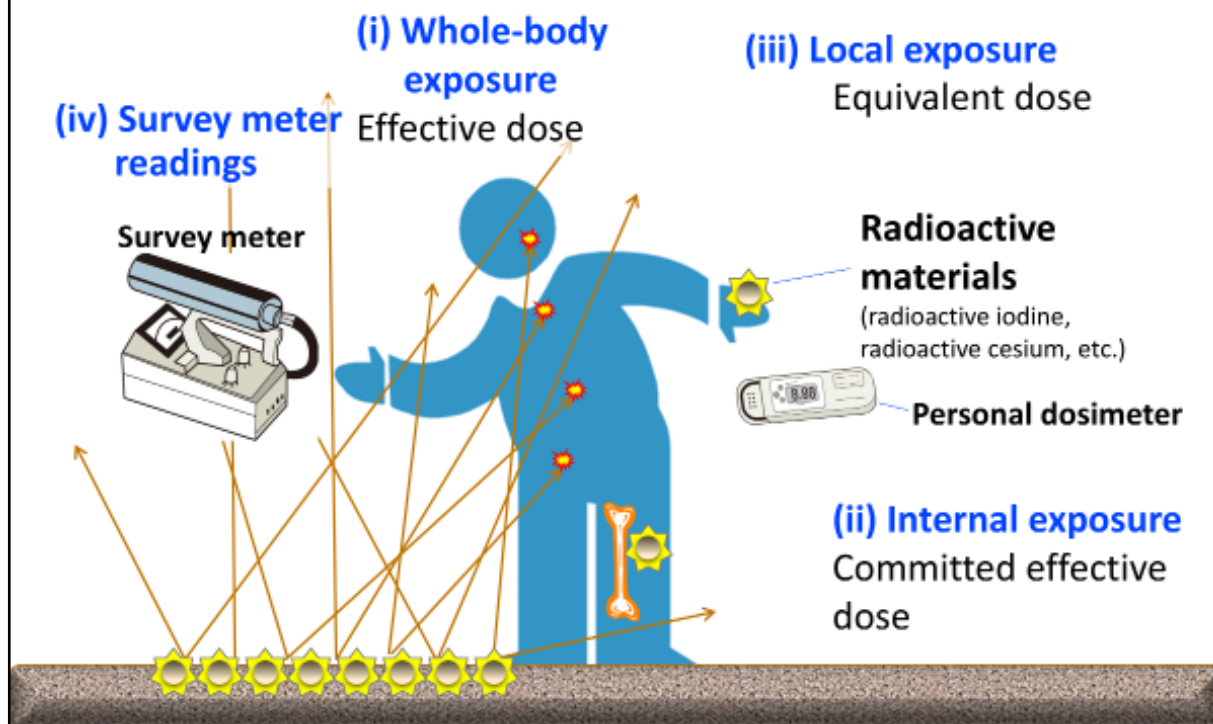
This is also the case for a personal dosimeter when measuring radiation incident only from the front. However, in a setting where a personal dosimeter is worn on the body and radiation sources are evenly distributed, measured value will be close to the value of “effective dose” because of the self-shielding effect of the human back, etc.

The graph above shows differences between effective dose (including the self-shielding effect of the back, etc. in the case of even irradiation by rotation) and ambient dose equivalent to the energy of incident γ -rays. While the degree of self-shielding slightly varies depending on differences in physique due to age, the value measured with a survey meter for Cs-137 γ -rays at 662 keV is shown to be about 30% larger than the effective dose for adults and the value measured with a personal dosimeter (personal dose equivalent). (Related to p.41 of Vol. 1, “Dose Equivalents: Measurable Operational Quantities for Deriving Effective Doses”)

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Doses in Units of Sieverts



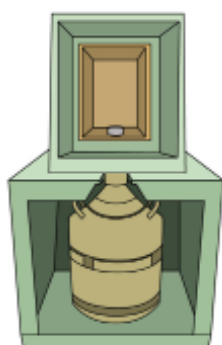
Sievert is used as the unit for (i) radiation dose to the whole body (effective dose) (p.42 of Vol. 1, "Difference between Values of Effective Dose and Dose Equivalent"), (ii) radiation dose due to internal exposure (committed effective dose) (p.56 of Vol. 1, "Committed Effective Doses"), and (iii) dose from local exposure, in which exposure to radiation is limited to a certain location (equivalent dose). They are common in that they all take into account the risks of cancer and heritable effects on individuals or tissues exposed.

Sievert may also be used for (iv) the readings of survey meters. The relevant value shows a value converted to an ambient dose equivalent (p.44 of Vol. 1, "Various Measuring Instruments").

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Various Measuring Instruments



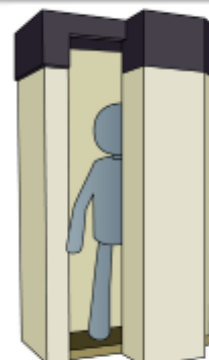
Ge Semiconductor Detector

Used to measure radioactivity in foods or soil; Effective in measuring low levels of radioactivity concentrations



Nal (TI) Food Monitor

Suitable for efficient radioactivity measurement of foods, etc.



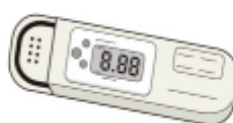
Whole-body Counter

Assess accumulation of γ -ray nuclides in the body using numerous scintillation counters or the like



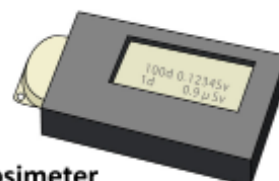
Integrating Personal Dosimeter

Worn on the trunk of the body for 1-3 months to measure cumulative exposure doses during that period



Electronic Personal Dosimeter

Equipped with a device to display dose rates or cumulative doses during a certain period of time and thus convenient for measuring and managing exposure doses of temporary visitors to radiation handling facilities



While radiation is not visible to the human eye, it is known to cause ionization and excitation (p.45 of Vol. 1, "Principles of Radiation Measurement"), and a variety of measuring instruments using these effects have been invented for different purposes and applications. The measuring instruments shown above all utilize the excitation effect.

To measure radioactivity concentrations in foods and soil, measuring instruments wherein a germanium detector (Ge detector) or a Nal (TI) detector that can measure γ -ray spectra is installed in a lead shield are used. Ge detectors are excellent in γ -ray energy resolution and suitable for determining traces of radioactive materials. Nal (TI) detectors are not as excellent as Ge detectors in terms of energy resolution but are easy to handle and have relatively high detection efficiency, so they are widely used in food inspection.

Also commercially available are whole-body counters that use numerous scintillation counters or Ge detectors worn on the body to assess accumulation of γ -ray nuclides in the body, as well as integrating personal dosimeters and electronic personal dosimeters for managing personal exposure. In particular, after the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS, a variety of electronic personal dosimeters have been invented to allow easy monitoring of information on exposure at certain time intervals.

(Related to p.60 of Vol. 1, "Instruments for Measuring Internal Exposure")

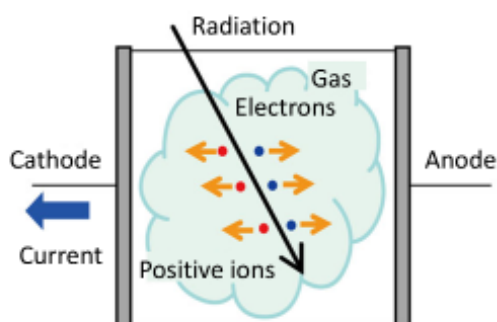
Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2017

Principles of Radiation Measurement

Measurements are carried out utilizing the interaction between radiation and substances.

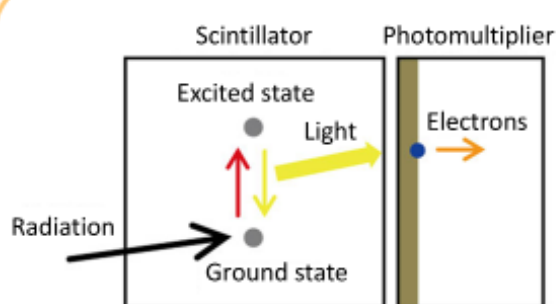
Ionization (with gas atoms)



- Detectors are filled with gases such as inert gases or air.
- When radiation passes through gas, molecules are ionized, creating positive ions and electrons.
- Positive ions and electrons are drawn toward the electrodes and are converted into electric signals for measurement.

GM counter survey meters, ionization chambers, etc.

Excitation



- When radiation passes through a scintillator, molecules are excited, but they return to their original state (ground state).
- Light emitted in the process is amplified and converted into a current for measurement.

NaI (TI) scintillation survey meter, etc.

Radiation is known to interact with substances when passing through them. The amount of radiation can be measured utilizing the interaction between radiation and substances.

Geiger Muller (GM) counter survey meters and ionization chambers utilize the ionization between radiation and gas atoms. "Ionization effect" refers to the process in which radiation ejects electrons circling around nuclei in a substance. Detectors of GM counter survey meters and ionization chambers are filled with gases. When radiation passes inside a detector, it causes ionization of gas atoms, separating atoms into positive ions and electrons. Separated electrons and positive ions are attracted to the electrodes, causing a current to flow. This is converted into electric signals, which are then measured as the amount of radiation. As devices for radiation measurement by the use of ionization effect within a solid (a semiconductor) in the same manner, there are germanium semiconductor detectors and others. (Related to p.18 of Vol. 1, "Ionization of Radiation - Property of Ionizing Radiation")

NaI (TI) scintillation survey meters utilize excitation with substances. Radiation gives energy to electrons circling around nuclei, and when an electron jumps to an outer orbit, this phenomenon is called excitation. An atom in that state is unstable (excited), and when it returns to a stable state (ground state), it gives off energy in the form of light. This is called the excitation effect. A scintillator is a substance that emits light in response to incident radiation. Weak light emitted from a scintillator is amplified using a photomultiplier and is converted into an electric signal to measure radiation.

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Updated on March 31, 2024

Detection Limit

ND: Abbreviation of "Not Detected"

ND = The measured value was less than the detection limit.

 The measured value was zero.

The measurement result "ND" means that
the measured value was less than the detection limit.

Detection limits vary depending on measurement time and the sample amount.
Detection limits are set by each measurement laboratory in accordance with the purpose
of the measurement.

◆ The longer the measurement time is, the
lower the detection limit becomes.

The measurement time is increased by X times.

→ The detection limit becomes $\frac{1}{\sqrt{X}}$ times.

Example 1: When the measurement time is doubled,
the detection limit becomes $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}$ times.

Example 2: In order to lower the detection limit from
60 Bq/kg to 30 Bq/kg, the measurement time needs
to be increased by four times.

◆ The larger the sample amount is, the lower
the detection limit becomes.

Example: If the detection limit is 200 Bq/kg when the
sample amount is 0.2 kg, increasing the sample
amount to 1 kg leads to lowering the detection limit
to 40 Bq/kg.

Prepared based on the "Analysis of Radioactive Materials" (December 2011) by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
https://www.maff.go.jp/j/syouan/seisaku/data_reliance/maff_torikumi/pdf/rad_kensyu.pdf (in Japanese)

Results of the measurement of radioactivity or dose rates are sometimes indicated as "Not Detected (ND)."

This does not mean that there is no radioactive material but means that the measured concentration of radioactive materials is below the measurable detection limit.

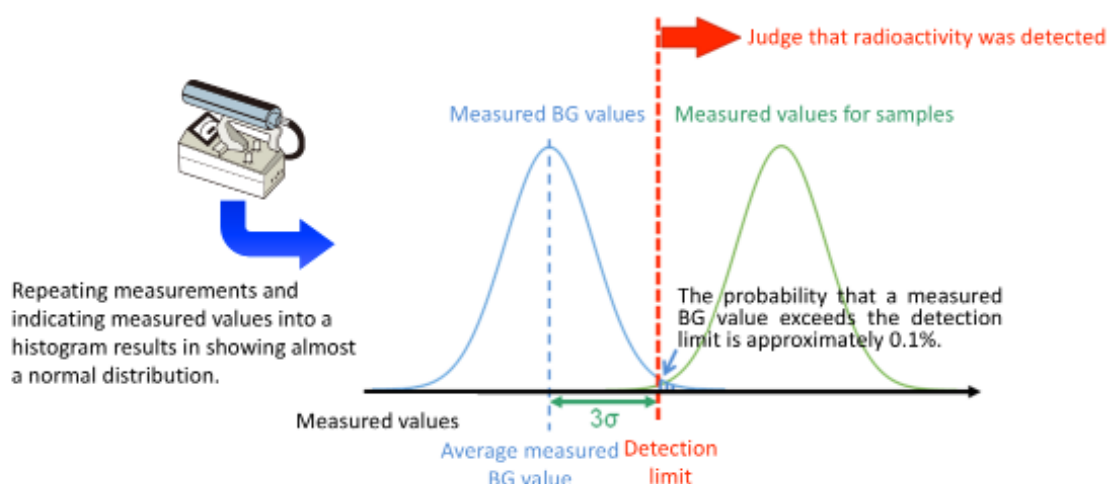
Detection limits vary depending on the measurement time and the sample amount, and in general, the longer the measurement time is and the larger the sample amount is, the lower the detection limit becomes. When setting a detection limit lower, even a small amount of radioactive materials can be detected, but required time and cost are larger and this may lead to a decrease in the number of samples to be tested. Accordingly, detection limits are set by individual analytical laboratories in accordance with the purpose of the measurement.

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Updated on March 31, 2021

Ideas on Detection Limits (3 σ Method)

- Even a minor change in measurement conditions can influence measurement results and there is also background (BG) radioactivity derived not from samples themselves. Therefore, due consideration is required when setting a detection limit in order to assure statistical reliability.
- One of the representative ideas on detection limits is the 3 σ method. Under the 3 σ method, a detection limit is defined as a value obtained by adding three times sigma of the measured background values to their average. When a measurement result exceeds this value, it is judged that signals (radioactivity, a dose rate, etc.) from a sample are detected.



When measuring background radioactivity or dose rates using a survey meter or other equipment, even a minor change in measurement conditions can influence measurement results. Therefore, it is necessary to repeat measurements in order to obtain reliable measurement results.

Indicating values obtained through repeated measurements into a histogram results in showing a normal distribution. The minimum amount of radioactivity that can be detected as a statistically significant value under the condition of fluctuating background dose rates is referred to as a detection limit (or lower limit).

Under the 3 σ method, one of the representative ideas on detection limits, a detection limit is defined as a value obtained by adding three times sigma to the average of the measured background values. This is because when the measured value is larger than 3 σ , the probability of BG measurements that exceed the detection limit by fluctuation is approximately 0.1%.

In addition to the 3 σ method, there is the Currie method. Under this method, a lower detection limit is set in consideration of the fluctuation of sample measurements so as to reduce the probability of a “false negative,” where measurements close to but above the detection limit are judged as Not Detected (ND).

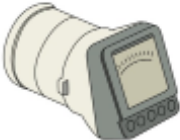
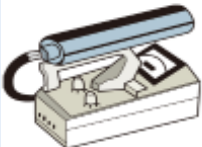
Reference

- “Practical handbook for γ -ray measurement,” authored by Gordon Gilmore and John D. Hemingway, translated into Japanese by Yonezawa Nakashiro, et al., NIKKAN KOGYO SHIMBUN, LTD. (2002)
- “Ideas on detection limits and minimum limits of determination,” by Uemoto Michihisa, Bunseki 2010 5, 216-221 (2010)

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2019

Updated on March 31, 2022

Instruments for Measuring External Exposure

Type		Purpose	
GM counter survey meter (ionization)		Contamination detection	Has a thin entrance window and can detect β -particles efficiently; Suitable for detecting surface contamination
Ionization chamber survey meter (ionization)		γ -ray ambient dose rate	Accurate but unable to measure low dose rates like a scintillation type can
Nal (Tl) scintillation survey meter (excitation)		γ -ray ambient dose rate	Accurate and very sensitive; Suitable for measuring γ -ray ambient dose rates from the environment level up to around $10\mu\text{Sv/h}$
Personal dosimeter (light-stimulated luminescence dosimeter, luminescent glass dosimeter, electronic dosimeter, etc.) (excitation)		Personal dose Cumulative dose	Worn on the trunk of the body to measure personal dose equivalent of the relevant person's exposure while it is worn; A direct-reading type and types with alarm functions are also available.

Survey meters are either for inspecting body surface contamination or for measuring ambient dose rates. Geiger Muller (GM) tube-type survey meters are highly sensitive to β (beta)-particles and are thus suitable for inspecting body surface contamination. They are relatively affordable and useful in locating contamination and confirming the effects of decontamination.

Ionization chambers are most suited for measuring high-level ambient dose rates but cannot measure very low dose rates. Therefore, a scintillation type is most suited for measuring ambient dose rates in the general environment.

Nal (Tl) scintillation survey meters can also measure the radioactivity intensity, but measurement results vary depending on the level of radiation at the measuring location and the way of measurement. Since calibration at a facility with a radioactive source that serves as a reference is required before converting the measurement results into becquerels, expert assistance is required to implement the measurements.

Personal dosimeters provide cumulative exposure dose readings. An electronic direct-reading type allows a person to confirm the degree of exposure at certain time intervals or after every operation.

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Updated on March 31, 2019

Methods of Measuring Doses

Example: Nal (TI) scintillation survey meter (TCS-171)

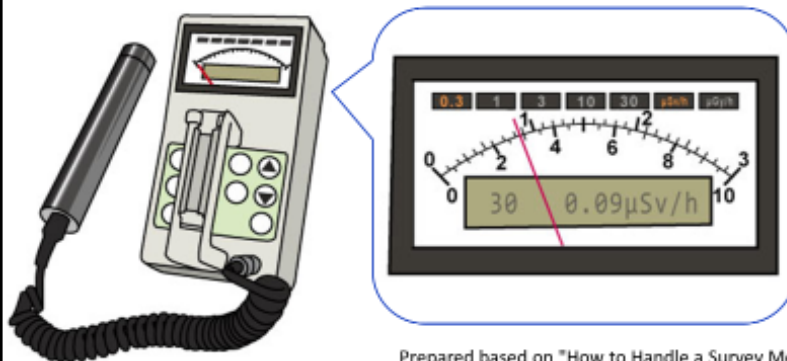
(i) Background measurement

(ii) Field measurement

- Range (the reading is indicated near the center of the scale)
- Adjustment of time constant (the value is to be read when a period of time three times the time constant elapses)

(iii) Dose calculation

- Reading $\times$ Calibration constant = Dose ($\mu\text{Sv/h}$)



How to interpret the readings

0.3, 3, 30 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ in the upper row
1, 10 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ in the lower row

- The photo shows a range of 0.3 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$.
- Read the value in the upper row
- The needle pointing at 0.92

The reading at 0.092 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$

For example, when the calibration constant is 0.95
Dose = $0.092 \times 0.95 = 0.087 \mu\text{Sv/h}$

Prepared based on "How to Handle a Survey Meter" on the website of the Prime Minister's Office

A method of measuring γ -ray ambient dose rate using a Nal scintillation survey meter is shown as an example of a method of measuring doses.

Before measurement, the device is checked for soundness (appearance, power supply, high voltage) and then background is measured (set a range at $0.3 \mu\text{Sv/h}$ and a time constant at 30 sec). Normally, the background value is around $0.1 \mu\text{Sv/h}$.

Field measurements are normally carried out at a height of about 1 m above the ground. The counting range is adjusted so that the meter readings come near the center of the scale. The time constant is adjusted according to the purpose of measurement. For measurements in a rough, wide range or of high doses, the time constant is lowered. To make accurate measurements or to measure low doses, the time constant is increased. After a period of time about three times the time constant has elapsed since the start of a field measurement, the average of the readings is read (for example, the value is read after the lapse of 90 seconds when the time constant is 30 sec.).

The dose equivalent rate ($\mu\text{Sv/h}$) can be obtained by multiplying the reading by the calibration constant that is preset for each measurement condition.

When using measuring instruments, precautions should be taken such as checking whether they operate properly before use, handling them carefully because they are precision instruments, covering measuring instruments with polyethylene sheets during rain or when making measurements in highly contaminated areas, etc.

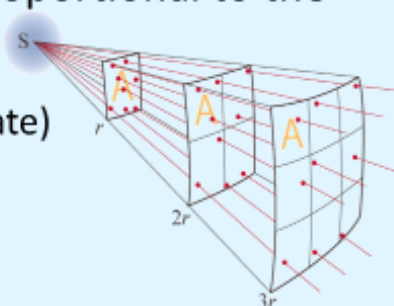
Included in this reference material on March 31, 2017

Updated on March 31, 2019

- 1) **Distance:** Dose rates are inversely proportional to the distance squared.

$$I = \frac{k}{r^2}$$

I : Radiation intensity (dose rate)
 r : Distance
 k : Constant



- 2) **Time:** Doses are proportional to the time of exposure provided the dose rates are the same.

$$\text{(Total) dose (microsieverts)} = \text{Dose rate (microsieverts/h)} \times \text{Time}$$

The intensity of radiation (dose rate) is strong (large) when the source of radiation (radiation source) is close, and it gets weaker (smaller) as the distance increases, even if the amount of radioactive materials remains the same. When the radioactive materials are located only in one place (point source), the dose rate becomes smaller in inverse proportion to the distance squared. Dose rates also decrease due to atmospheric influence, etc.

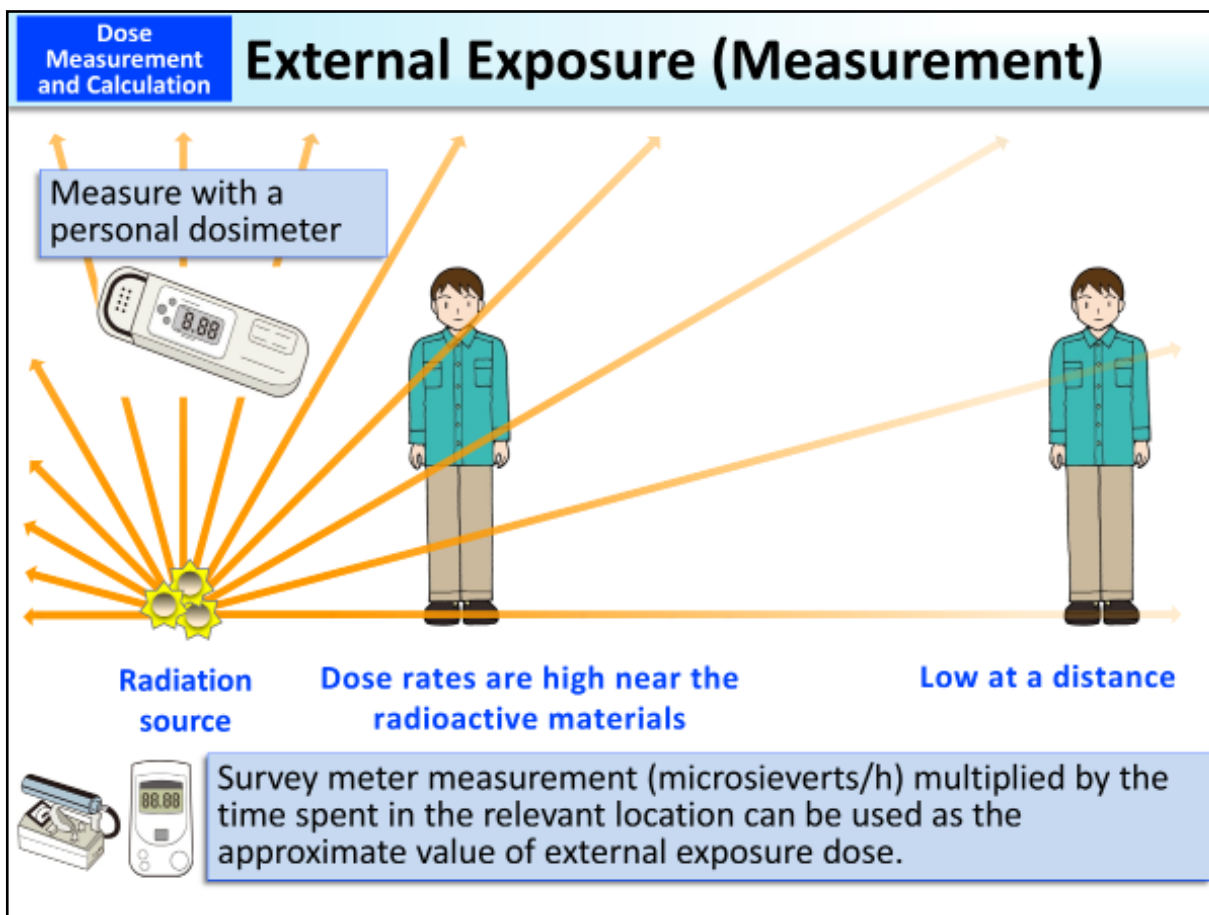
When radioactive materials are evenly distributed on a broad plain surface, the formula to express the relationship between the distance and the dose rate is rather complicated, but as in the case of a point source, the higher it is from the ground surface, the lower the dose rate is. However, radioactive materials are not evenly distributed in reality and a plain surface is not necessarily smooth, and also owing to attenuation of radiation in the air or other reasons, the dose rate does not always match the value obtained from the relational expression.

Calculation of external exposure doses is based not on the radioactivity intensity (becquerels) but on the amount of radiation (grays or sieverts) the human body is exposed to.

If the dose rate is constant, the total exposure dose can be calculated by multiplying the dose rate by the time of exposure to radiation.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

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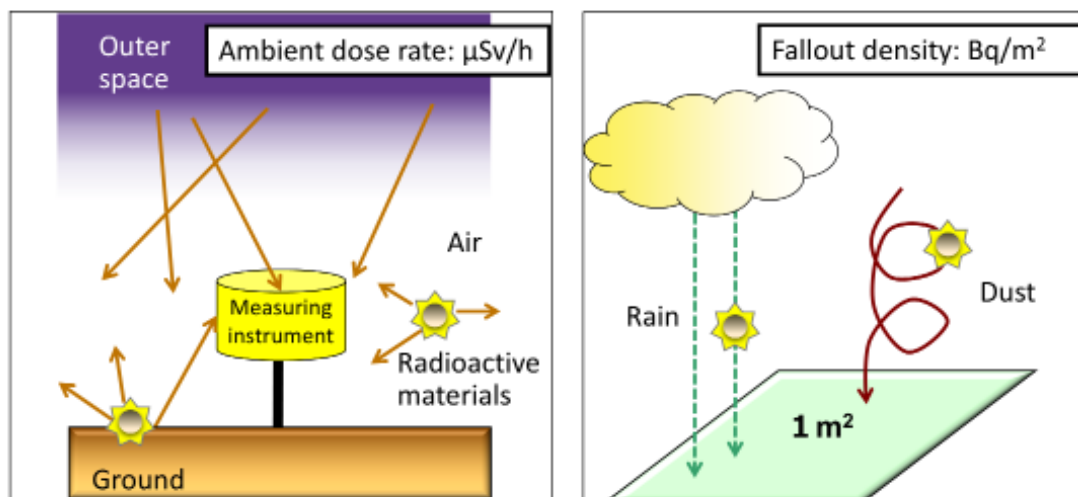
One of the means to measure doses due to external exposure is to wear a personal dosimeter on the body. Personal dosimeters can measure cumulative amounts of radiation exposure for a certain period of time, and provide dose rate readings.

Another means is to measure radiation dose rates in a workplace with a survey meter to estimate the level of exposure supposing that a person stays in that place. Since α (alpha)-particles and β (beta)-particles from outside the body do not reach into the body (p.22 of Vol. 1, "Penetrating Power and Range of Effects on the Human Body"), γ -rays are measured to obtain doses due to external exposure. Many recent instruments provide readings in microsieverts per hour ($\mu\text{Sv/h}$), so such readings are multiplied by the time a person spent in a certain location to roughly calculate his/her external exposure dose. However, these measurements must be made with an instrument, such as a NaI (TI) scintillation survey meter, that has proper performance and is well calibrated.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2021

- **Ambient dose rate** shows measured amount of γ -rays in the air. Indicated in microsieverts per hour ($\mu\text{Sv/h}$)
- **Fallout density** is the amount of radioactive materials that have deposited (or descended) per unit area in a certain period of time. e.g., becquerels per squared meter (Bq/m^2)



The ambient dose rate is obtained by measuring γ -ray doses in the air, and is indicated in microsieverts per hour. γ -rays from radioactive materials suspended in the air and γ -rays from radioactive materials fallen on the ground are both detected. The measured value is not limited to the amount of radiation derived from accidents. Major natural radiation is that from the ground and cosmic rays.

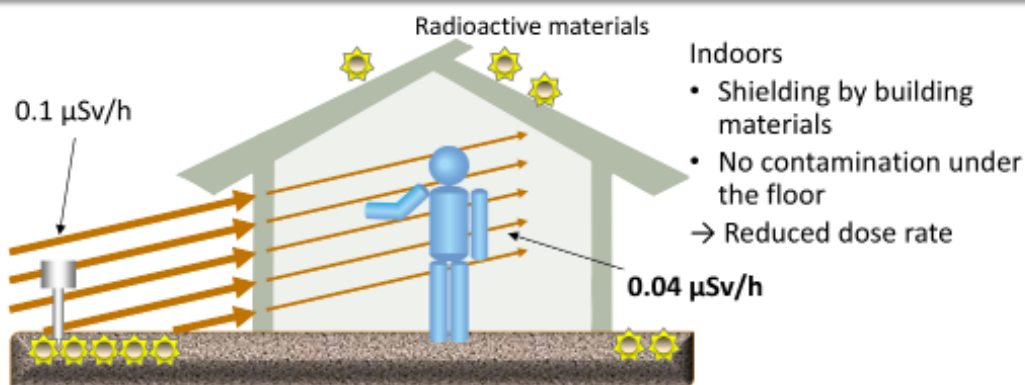
Normally, a measuring instrument is placed at a height of about 1 m from the ground, because most important internal organs are located at this height in the case of an adult. There are cases where a measurement instrument is placed at a height of 50 cm from the ground in places where mainly children spend time, such as schools and kindergartens.

The amount of radioactivity in fallout is expressed as the amount of radioactive materials fallen per unit area. Generally, such amount is expressed as a numerical value per day or month for each kind of radioactive material.

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Updated on March 31, 2019

Shielding and Reduction Coefficient



Location	Reduction coefficient*
Wooden house (one or two stories)	0.4
Block or brick house (one or two stories)	0.2
The first and second floors of a building (three or four stories) with each floor 450-900m ² wide	0.05
Upper floors of a building with each floor 900m ² or wider	0.01

* The ratio of doses in a building when assuming that a dose outdoors at a sufficient distance from the building is 1
 Source: Prepared based on the "Disaster Prevention Countermeasures for Nuclear Facilities, etc." (June 1980 (partly revised in August 2010)), Nuclear Safety Commission

In the absence of an appropriate survey meter for measuring ambient dose rates (p.48 of Vol. 1, "Instruments for Measuring External Exposure"), calculations can be made based on the ambient dose rates that the government or local municipalities issued. For the amount of exposure outdoors, measurement results obtained near the relevant building are used. To calculate doses indoors, the indoor ambient dose rate is estimated by multiplying the value of nearby outdoor dose rate by a reduction coefficient.

Reduction coefficients, which take into consideration the effect of shielding by the building and the fact that there is no contamination under the floor, vary depending on the types of buildings and whether radioactive materials are suspended or deposited. When radioactive materials are deposited on soil or a building, in the case of a wooden house, for example, radiation from outside is blocked and the total amount of radiation indoors is reduced to around 40% of the initial amount outdoors. Houses made of blocks, bricks or reinforced concrete have higher shielding effects and radiation levels inside are lower than in wooden houses.

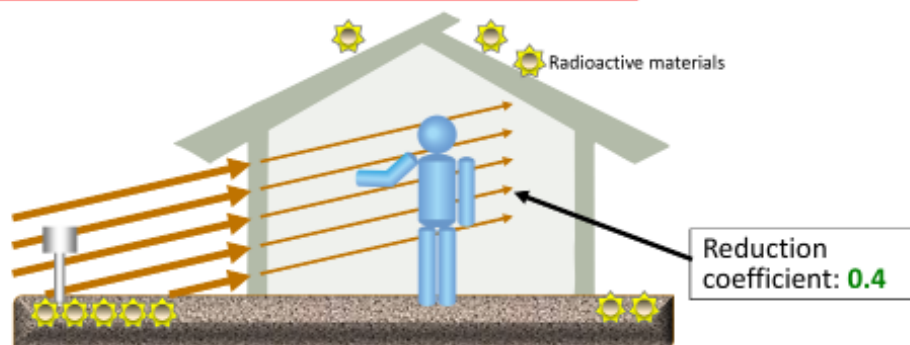
Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2019

Additional Exposure Doses after an Accident (Example of Calculation)

It is important to subtract values in normal times.

Dose rate (increase due to an accident: $\mu\text{Sv/h}$)
Actual measurement - Value in normal times
= Exposure rate at the time of the accident



Exposure rate at the time of the accident
 $\times$ Number of hours spent outdoors in a day
 $+$
Exposure rate at the time of the accident $\times 0.4$
 $\times$ Number of hours spent indoors in a day

Daily exposure dose

$\times 365 \text{ days} =$ Annual additional exposure dose

The ambient dose rate measured with a survey meter includes γ -rays from natural environment. To calculate the amount of radiation released due to the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS alone, the values measured before the accident (background values) must be subtracted from the currently measured ambient dose rates to ascertain the increase caused by the accident. The values before the accident are available on the website, "Environmental Radioactivity and Radiation in Japan" (<https://www.kankyo-hoshano.go.jp/data/database/>, in Japanese).

The value obtained by multiplying the increased outdoor and indoor dose rates by the time spent indoors and outdoors is an approximate increase in exposure dose compared with normal times (additional exposure dose).

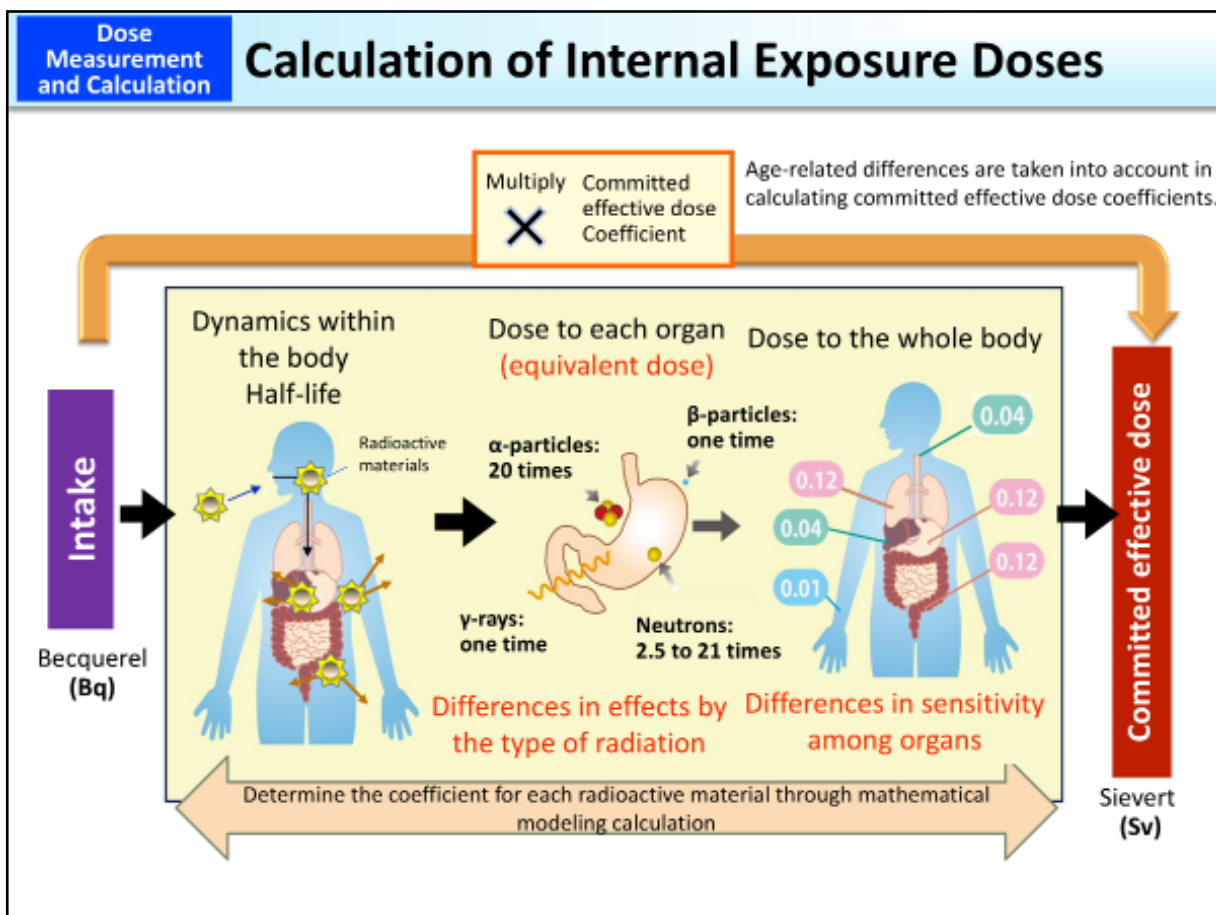
The calculation example for obtaining a daily additional exposure dose after the accident is made under the assumption that a person stays outdoors for eight hours and stays in a typical Japanese house with a reduction coefficient of 0.4 for 16 hours. Furthermore, an annual additional exposure dose is estimated by multiplying the daily additional exposure dose by 365, the number of days in a year.

The value of $0.23 \mu\text{Sv/h}$, which was adopted as the reference value in designating Intensive Contamination Survey Areas where mainly municipalities conduct decontamination after the accident, is derived from the annual additional exposure dose of 1 mSv (hourly exposure dose of $0.19 \mu\text{Sv}$, which becomes 1 mSv in annualized terms under the same assumption on the safe side as applied in the above calculation example, plus the exposure dose due to natural radiation of $0.04 \mu\text{Sv}$).

This calculation example is a simplified estimation method provided under the conservative assumption in the response to the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi NPS. Therefore, it is considered that the actual external exposure dose of an individual in real life may be lower than the calculation result.

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Updated on March 31, 2022



Methods of obtaining effective doses due to internal exposure are essentially the same as for external exposure. However, how to calculate absorbed doses for respective organs and tissues is different.

The part of the body where radioactive materials accumulate varies by their types. Even the same type of radioactive material differs in the behavior within the body, such as metabolism and accumulation, depending on whether they enter the body via the respiratory organs through inhalation or via the digestive tract together with foods and drinks. Moreover, how long radioactive materials will remain in the body varies depending on whether the person is an adult, a child, or an infant.

Mathematical model calculation is performed for each of these different conditions to determine the relationship between the intake of radioactive materials and the absorbed dose of each organ and tissue. Then, differences in sensitivity by types of radiation and among different organs are taken into account in the same manner as for calculation of external exposure doses. An internal exposure dose calculated in this way is called a committed effective dose (in sieverts) (p.56 of Vol. 1, “Committed Effective Doses”).

Specifically, internal exposure doses can be obtained by multiplying intake (in becquerels) by a committed effective dose coefficient. Committed effective dose coefficients are defined in detail for each type of radionuclide and age group (p.57 of Vol. 1, “Conversion Factors to Effective Doses”).

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2019

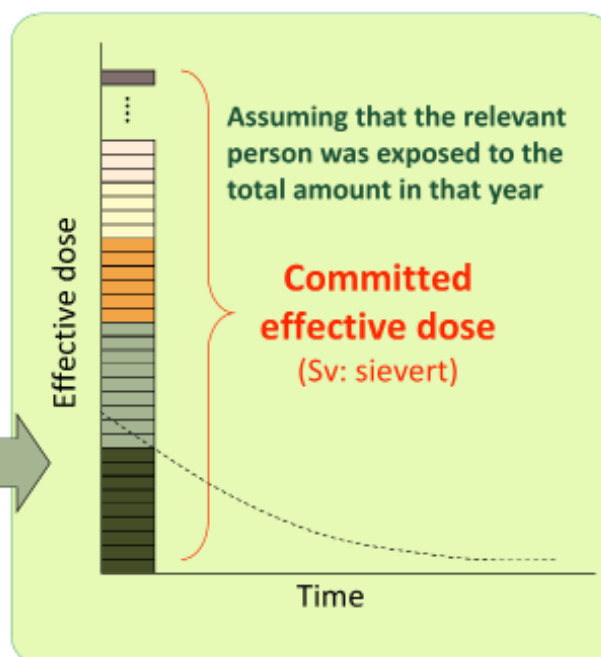
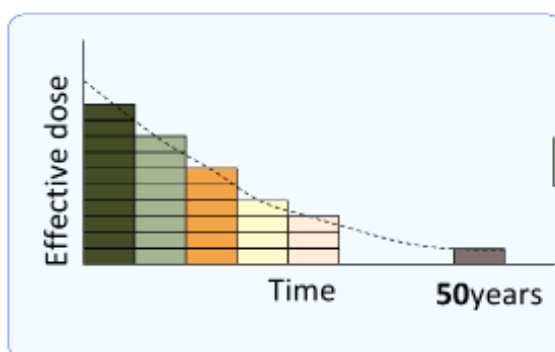
Committed Effective Doses

Exposure dose estimating how much radiation a person will be exposed to in lifetime from a single intake of radioactive materials

Calculation of internal exposure

Integrating future doses

- Public (adult): 50 years after intake
- Children: up to age 70 after intake



Radioactive materials remain in the body for a certain period of time after being taken into the body. In the meantime, the body will be continuously exposed to radiation. Thus, the total amount of radiation that a person will be exposed to into the future is calculated as dose due to internal exposure based on a single intake of radioactive materials. This is called a committed dose (in sieverts).

Any radioactive materials taken into the body will decrease over time. One contributing factor is the decay of the radioactive materials. Another is excretion as urine and feces. The rate of excretion from the body varies according to the types of elements, their chemical forms, and the age of the person. With these differences taken into account, the cumulative amount of radiation that the human body will receive in a lifetime from radioactive materials is assumed as the amount received in the year of the intake, and a committed dose is calculated.

In particular, the lifetime cumulative dose based on effective dose is called “committed effective dose.” The lifetime here is 50 years for adults, and for children it is the number of years up to reaching age 70. In the case of radioactive cesium, which is discharged out of the body at a fast rate (Cesium-134 and Cesium-137 have effective half-lives of 64 days and 70 days, respectively) (p.31 of Vol. 1, “Radioactive Materials Derived from Nuclear Accidents”), most of the committed dose is considered to be received within 2 to 3 years after its intake.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2015

Conversion Factors to Effective Doses

Committed effective dose coefficients ($\mu\text{Sv/Bq}$) (ingestion)

	Strontium-90	Iodine-131	Cesium-134	Cesium-137	Plutonium-239	Tritium*
Three months old	0.23	0.18	0.026	0.021	4.2	0.000064
One year old	0.073	0.18	0.016	0.012	0.42	0.000048
Five years old	0.047	0.10	0.013	0.0096	0.33	0.000031
Ten years old	0.06	0.052	0.014	0.01	0.27	0.000023
Fifteen years old	0.08	0.034	0.019	0.013	0.24	0.000018
Adult	0.028	0.022	0.019	0.013	0.25	0.000018

$\mu\text{Sv/Bq}$: microsieverts/becquerel

*Tissue free water tritium

Source: Prepared based on the ICRP Publication 119, Compendium of Dose Coefficients based on ICRP Publication 60, 2012, International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP)

For dose assessment for internal exposure, doses are calculated by estimating an intake for each nuclide and chemical form and multiplying estimated intakes by dose coefficients. Dose coefficients are committed equivalent doses or committed effective doses for an intake of 1 Bq and a specific value has been given for each nuclide, chemical form, intake route (ingestion or inhalation), and for each age group by the ICRP.

The commitment period, i.e., the period during which doses are accumulated, is 50 years for adults and the number of years up to reaching age 70 after intake for children.

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Updated on February 28, 2018

Exposure Doses from Foods (Example of
Calculation)

(e.g.) An adult consumed 0.5 kg of foods containing **100 Bq/kg** of **Cesium-137**

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 100 & \times & 0.5 & \times & 0.013 & = & 0.65 \text{ } \mu\text{Sv} \\
 (\text{Bq/kg}) & & (\text{kg}) & & (\mu\text{Sv/Bq}) & & \\
 & & & & & & = 0.00065 \text{ mSv}
 \end{array}$$

Committed effective dose coefficients ($\mu\text{Sv/Bq}$)

	Iodine-131	Cesium-137
Three months old	0.18	0.021
One year old	0.18	0.012
Five years old	0.10	0.0096
Adult	0.022	0.013

Bq: becquerels; μSv : microsieverts; mSv: millisieverts

Source: Prepared based on ICRP Publication 119, Compendium of Dose Coefficients based on ICRP Publication 60, 2012, International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP)

For example, the dose that an adult who consumed foods containing Cesium-137 will receive is calculated here.

Suppose the person has consumed 0.5 kg of foods containing 100 Bq of Cesium-137 per 1 kg.

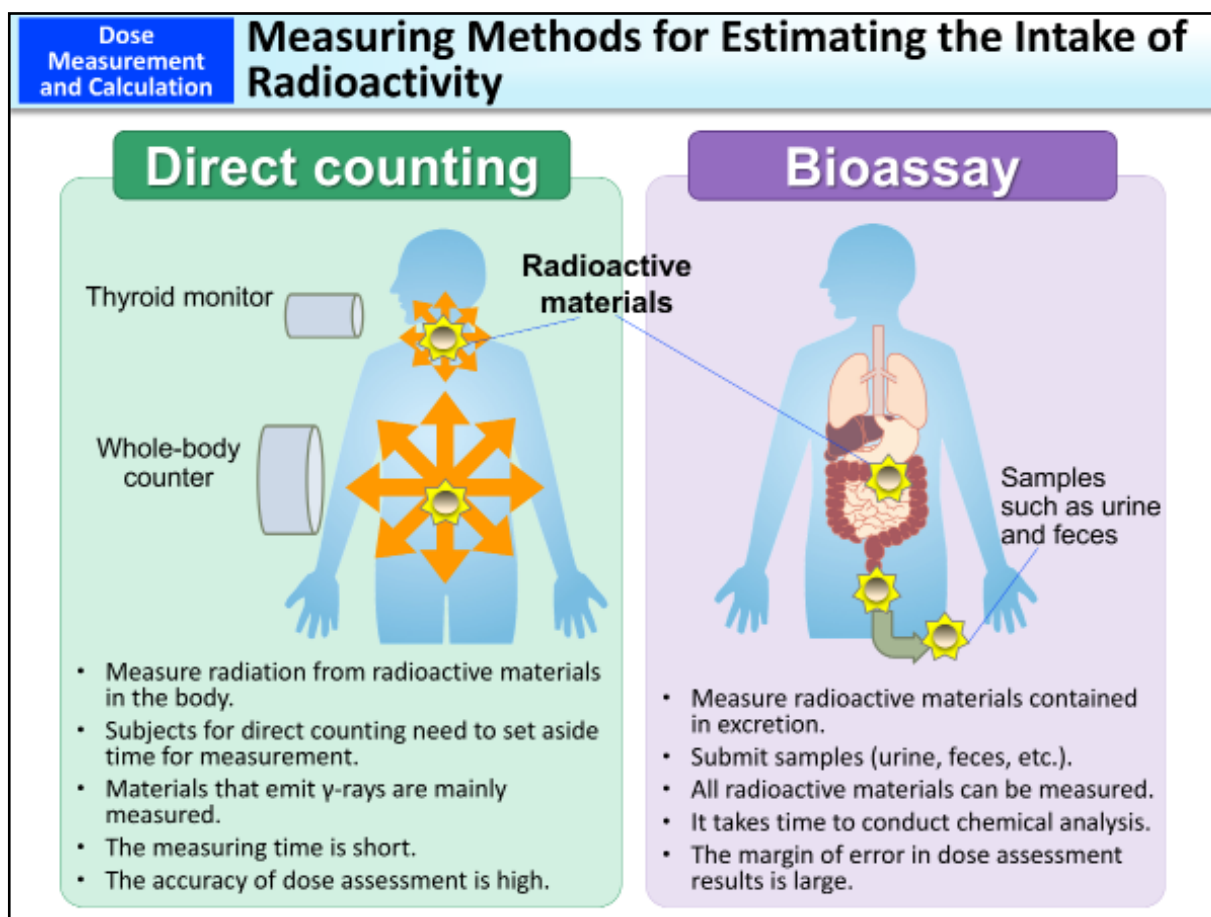
The amount of Cesium-137 actually consumed is 50 Bq. This value is multiplied by an effective dose coefficient to calculate committed effective dose (p.56 of Vol. 1, "Committed Effective Doses").

Committed effective dose coefficients are defined in detail for each type of radioactive material, each intake route (inhalation or ingestion), and each age group (p.57 of Vol. 1, "Conversion Factors to Effective Doses").

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2015

Measuring Methods for Estimating the Intake of Radioactivity



Direct counting methods that directly measure γ -rays coming from within the body or bioassay methods that measure the amount of radioactive materials in samples such as urine and feces are used to estimate the intake of radioactive materials, which is required for calculating internal exposure doses.

In direct counting, the longer the measuring time, the more accurate values can be obtained. However, external measuring instruments also measure radiation from the environment while measuring radiation from the human body. Therefore, if measurements are carried out in locations at high ambient dose rates, sufficient shielding against environmental radiation is required. These instruments cannot measure radioactive materials that do not emit γ -rays or X-rays.

Bioassays can measure all kinds of radioactive materials but cannot provide accurate numerical values based on a single sampling. Therefore, it is necessary to collect samples for several days (urine, feces, etc.). Given that the amounts of radioactive materials excreted varies depending on individuals, their health conditions and amounts of food consumption, the margin of error is considered to be larger than that by direct counting.

Based on the results obtained using these methods, intake scenario (i.e., such as date of intake, acute or chronic intake, chemical form or particulate size, route of intake etc.) is taken into consideration and mathematical models (p.55 of Vol. 1, "Calculation of Internal Exposure Doses") are used to calculate the percentages of radioactive materials remaining in the body or excreting into the samples measured to determine the intake of radionuclides. In both methods, if an exposure scenario is not certain, calculation results will have a larger margin of error.

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Updated on March 31, 2021



Stand-up
whole-body
counter



Scanning bed
whole-body
counter

Chair whole-body
counter



Thyroid
monitor



An instrument for measuring γ -rays emitted from the whole body, called a whole-body counter, is used to directly measure internal radioactivity. Whole-body counters have several types, including a stand-up type, bed type, and chair type.

Since radioactive cesium is distributed throughout the body, a whole-body counter is used to measure its amount within the body. If internal exposure by radioactive iodine is suspected, a thyroid monitor is used, as iodine accumulates in the thyroid (p.127 of Vol. 1, "Thyroid"). A radiation detector is applied to the part of the neck where the thyroid gland is situated to measure γ -rays emitted from there.

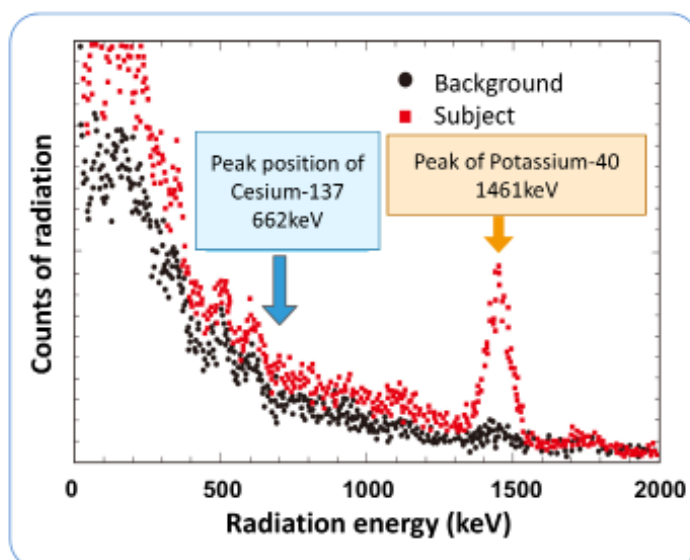
The time required for measurement is 1 to 5 minutes for simplified whole-body counters, 10 to 30 minutes for precision whole-body counters, and 2 to 5 minutes for thyroid monitors. (Related to p.172 of Vol. 2, "Internal Exposure Measurement Using a Whole-body Counter")

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Updated on February 28, 2018



Whole-body counter



Measure radiation emitted from within the body $\Rightarrow$ Measure internal radioactivity for each radioactive material

The amount of potassium in the body is around 2 g per 1 kg of body weight, and approx. 0.01% of that amount is radioactive potassium (Potassium-40)

keV: kilo electron volts

Radioactivity of each nuclide can be quantitatively assessed by measuring radiation emitted from within the body using a whole-body counter.

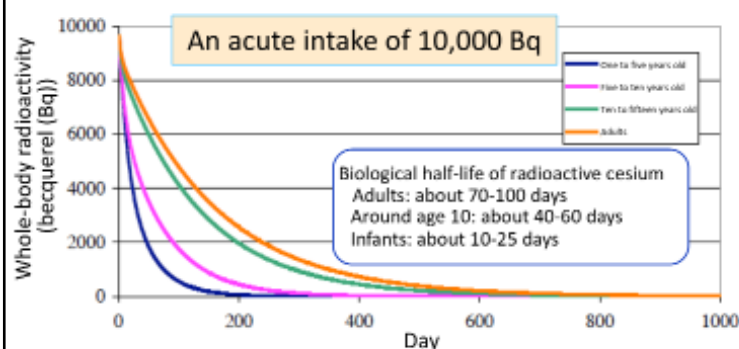
The black round dots in the graph represent values measured while no one is on the bed (background state). When the subject is on the bed, radiation peaks appear, as indicated by the red square dots. The energy of γ -rays is unique for each radioisotope. For example, radioactive potassium, K-40, emits γ -rays with energy of 1,461 keV. Therefore, if such amount of energy is detected, this reveals the existence of K-40 within the body. The gamma-ray energy of Cesium-137 is 662 keV.

While potassium is an element essential to life, approx. 0.01% of all potassium is radioactive. Radioactive potassium is mainly contained in water in cells and is present in muscles but is seldom present in fat cells that contain little water (p.8 of Vol. 1, "Naturally Occurring or Artificial").

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2015

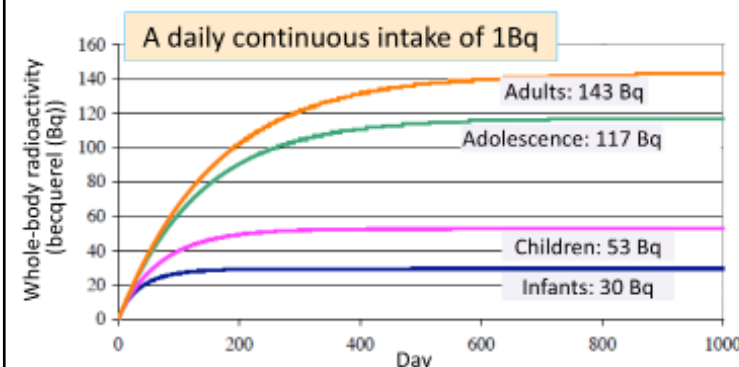
Radioactivity in the Body and Dose Assessment



The younger a person is, the faster the metabolism.

↓
Estimation of initial exposure

- will be effective for no longer than around a year even for adults.
- will be effective for up to around half a year for children.



The younger a person is, the smaller the amount of radioactive materials remaining in the body.

↓
In estimating additional exposure through ingestion,

- significant values are unlikely to be obtained in children.
- it is more reasonable to examine adults in order to detect trace intake.

Source: Prepared based on a material released for the Japan Society of Radiation Safety Management Symposium in Miyazaki (June 29, 2012)

Whole-body counters (WBCs) can measure the radioactivity content in a body on the day of measurement. Similar to other radiation measuring devices, WBCs have a detection limit depending on their performance and counting time.

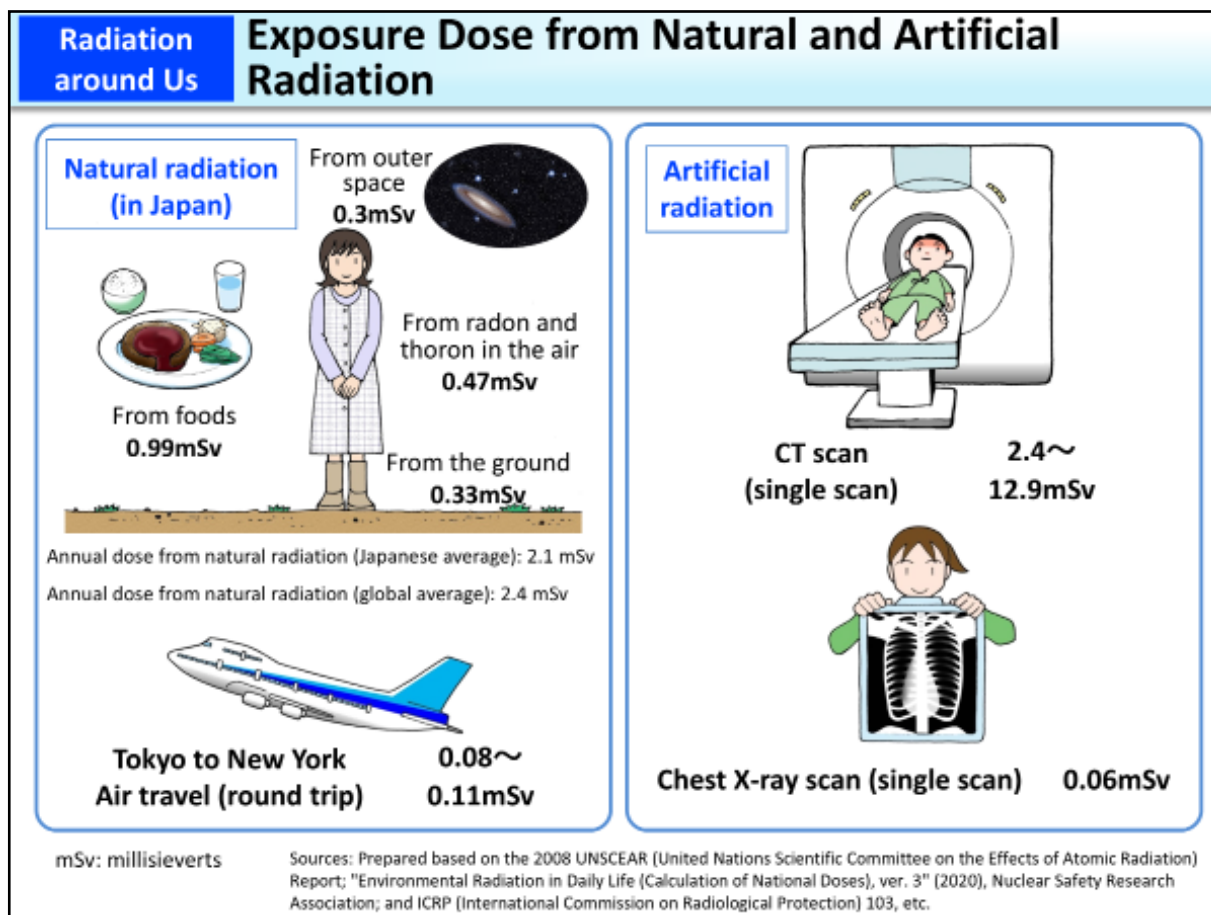
Given that radioactive cesium has a biological half-life of 70-100 days for adults (p.11 of Vol. 1, "Half-lives and Radioactive Decay"), around one year after the accident would be the time limit for estimation of the initial body burden (in the case of a single intake event at the beginning). As shown in the upper figure, the radioactivity of cesium incorporated into the body decreases in around a year to nearly zero, namely the level before the intake. Subsequent whole-body counting is performed for the purpose of estimating chronic exposure, mainly from foods (p.61 of Vol. 1, "Data on Internal Exposure Measured by Direct Counting").

In contrast, whole-body counting for children is likely to yield values lower than the detection limit because trace amounts of the initial intake can be observed for a period of about half a year, and the residual radioactivity accumulated in the body by chronic intake is also minimal in children. In such cases, it would be more reasonable to examine adults and estimate their internal doses in terms of understanding the internal exposure situation in details, taking into account the fact that the committed effective dose coefficients are similar for both children and adults, despite the notable difference in their metabolism rates.

In order to estimate the committed effective dose from the measurement result for the radioactivity in the body, it is necessary to use an appropriate intake scenario and an appropriate model aligned with the exposure circumstances, such as acute or chronic intake, inhalation or ingestion as a dominant route of intake, the time when the intake started, and so on.

Regarding radionuclides with short effective half-lives, such as I-131, the radioactivity in the body diminishes rapidly, making it difficult to detect such radionuclides as time progresses. Additionally, pure beta-emitters lacking γ -ray emission, such as Sr-90, also cannot be detected by a whole-body counter (WBC).

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Radiation exists around us and we are exposed to it in our daily lives without realizing. It is impossible to completely avoid radiation exposure in our daily lives.

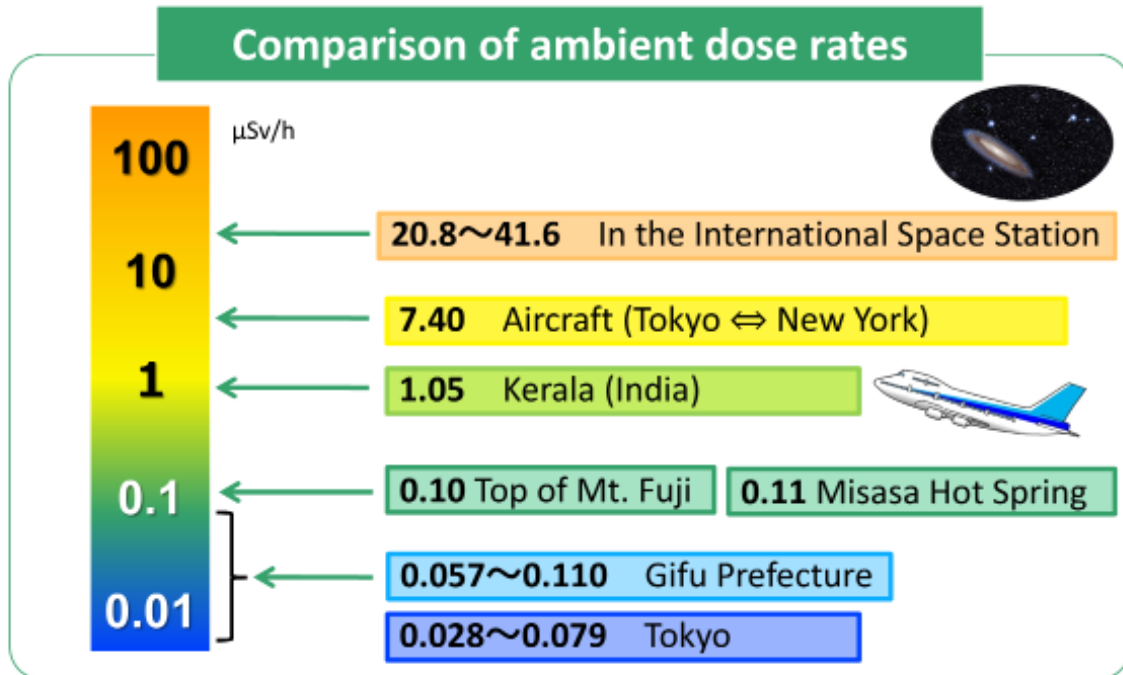
External exposure to natural radiation from outer space and the ground, and internal exposure to naturally occurring radioactive materials, such as those in foods and radon in the air, amount to a global average of 2.4 mSv and a Japanese average of 2.1 mSv annually (p.65 of Vol. 1, "Comparison of Exposure Doses per Year").

The percentage of medical exposure from radiological examinations is known to be high in Japan. The annual average medical exposure in Japan is estimated to be 2.6 mSv. This is considered due to the fact that an environment to ensure easy access to healthcare has been developed under the universal health insurance system and that CT scans, which involve high-dose exposure per examination, are quite common and upper gastro intestinal (UGI) examination is generally utilized for stomach cancer screening in Japan. In 2015, the diagnostic reference levels for medical exposure were established (revised in 2020), and efforts for optimizing medical exposure are now being made (p.76 of Vol. 1, "Radiation Doses from Medical Diagnosis").

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Comparison of Exposure Doses per Hour



Sources: Prepared based on "Radiation Exposure Management," the website of the JAXA Space Station Kibo PR Center, 2013; "Japanese Internet System for Calculation of Aviation Route Doses (JISCARD)," the website of the National Institute of Radiological Sciences; "Research on Ambient Gamma-ray Doses in the Environment," the website of the National Institute of Radiological Sciences; Furuno, p.25-33 of the 51st report of the Balneological Laboratory, Okayama University, 1981; and Nuclear Regulation Authority Radiation Monitoring Information (range of previous average values at monitoring posts)

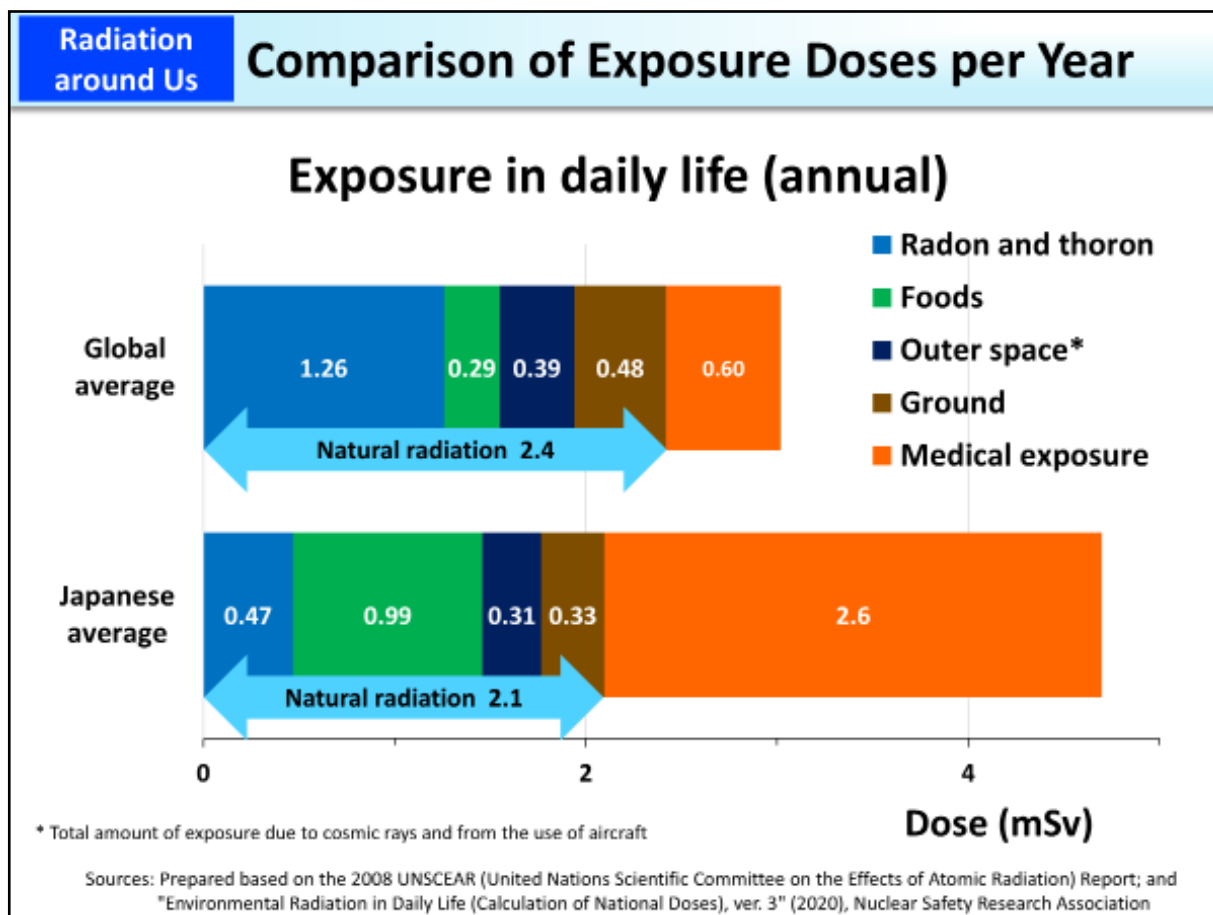
In outer space and aircraft, ambient dose rates are higher because of cosmic rays from galaxies and the Sun. Ambient dose rates are also high at high altitudes such as the top of Mt. Fuji, compared to low altitudes, because the influence of cosmic rays is stronger. At low altitudes, cosmic rays (radiation) interact with oxygen and nitrogen atoms in the atmosphere and thereby lose energy, resulting in reduced amounts of radiation reaching the ground. Accordingly, ambient dose rates become lower.

Ambient dose rates in most living spaces are in the range of 0.01 to 1 μSv/h, but there are areas where the level of natural radiation is high because soil there contains large amounts of radioactive materials, such as radium and thorium. Such areas are called high natural radiation areas (p.67 of Vol. 1, "Ground Radiation (World)").

While there is no high natural radiation area in Japan, ambient dose rates are slightly higher in places where soil contains a lot of radium, such as Misasa Onsen Hot Springs, which is famous for radon hot springs (p.68 of Vol. 1, "Ground Radiation (Japan)").

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In November 2020, the Nuclear Safety Research Association of Japan published “Environmental Radiation in Daily Life (Calculation of the National Doses) ver. 3” and announced Japan’s national doses therein. The survey shows that the annual average dose of Japanese people is 4.7 mSv, of which 2.1 mSv are estimated to be caused by exposure to natural radiation.

Comparison with the global average shows that Japanese people’s exposures to Radon-222 and Radon-220 (thoron) are relatively low while exposures from foods are relatively high. The Japanese people’s exposure due to Lead-210 and Polonium-210 in foods amounts to 0.80 mSv, which is high compared to the global average, probably due to Japanese people’s high consumption of fish and seafood (p.66 of Vol. 1, “Breakdown of Natural Exposure Doses (Japanese)”). Incidentally, analyses of Lead-210 and Polonium-210 in foods have rarely been conducted so often in foreign countries as in Japan and this is considered to be one of the factors of higher exposures to Lead-210 and Polonium-210 among Japanese compared with the global average.

The annual average medical exposure in Japan is estimated to be 2.6 mSv. As a result of the estimation based on the latest information, it was found that the annual average decreased significantly from 3.87 mSv stated in “Environmental Radiation in Daily Life (Calculation of the National Doses) ver. 2,” which was published in 2011. While exposure doses from radiological examinations vary widely among individuals, Japanese people’s exposure doses are known to be significantly high on average. In particular, the widespread use of CT scans is a major contributing factor. As criteria for determining the appropriateness of medical exposure, it is recommended to use the diagnostic reference levels. The diagnostic reference levels have also been published in Japan (p.76 of Vol. 1, “Radiation Doses from Medical Diagnosis”).

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Breakdown of Natural Exposure Doses (Japanese)		
Radiation around Us		
Type of exposure	Breakdown of radiation sources	Effective dose (mSv/year)
External exposure	Cosmic rays	0.3
	Terrestrial 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.)	0.006*
	Others (uranium, etc.)	0.006
Internal exposure (ingestion)	Mainly Lead-210 and Polonium-210	0.80
	Tritium	0.0000049
	Carbon-14	0.014
	Potassium-40	0.18
Exposure under special environments	Exposure due to hot springs or other subsurface environments	0.005
	Exposure due to the use of aircraft	0.008
Total		2.1

(*) Per capita effective doses; The average exposure dose for smokers is 0.040 mSv/y.

Source: Prepared based on "Environmental Radiation in Daily Life (Calculation of National Doses), ver. 3" (2020), 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. They are deposited on the ground or settled in rivers and oceans and are taken into the human body through foods.

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)

One reason why Japanese people's exposure doses from foods are higher compared to Western countries is that their diets contain lots of fish, which is abundant in Polonium-210. This accounts for Japanese people's large effective doses. Incidentally, analyses of Lead-210 and Polonium-210 in foods have rarely been conducted so often in foreign countries as in Japan and this is considered to be one of the factors of higher exposures to Lead-210 and Polonium-210 among the Japanese population when compared to the global average.

On the other hand, exposure to Radon is smaller among Japanese people, and this is considered to be due to the fact that the concentrations of Uranium-238, which generates Radon-222 through decay, are generally low in soil in Japan and that traditional Japanese houses are well ventilated and Radon-222 that seeps indoors from the ground is 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 the exposure doses due to natural tritium are relatively small (p.57 of Vol. 1, "Conversion Factors to Effective Doses").

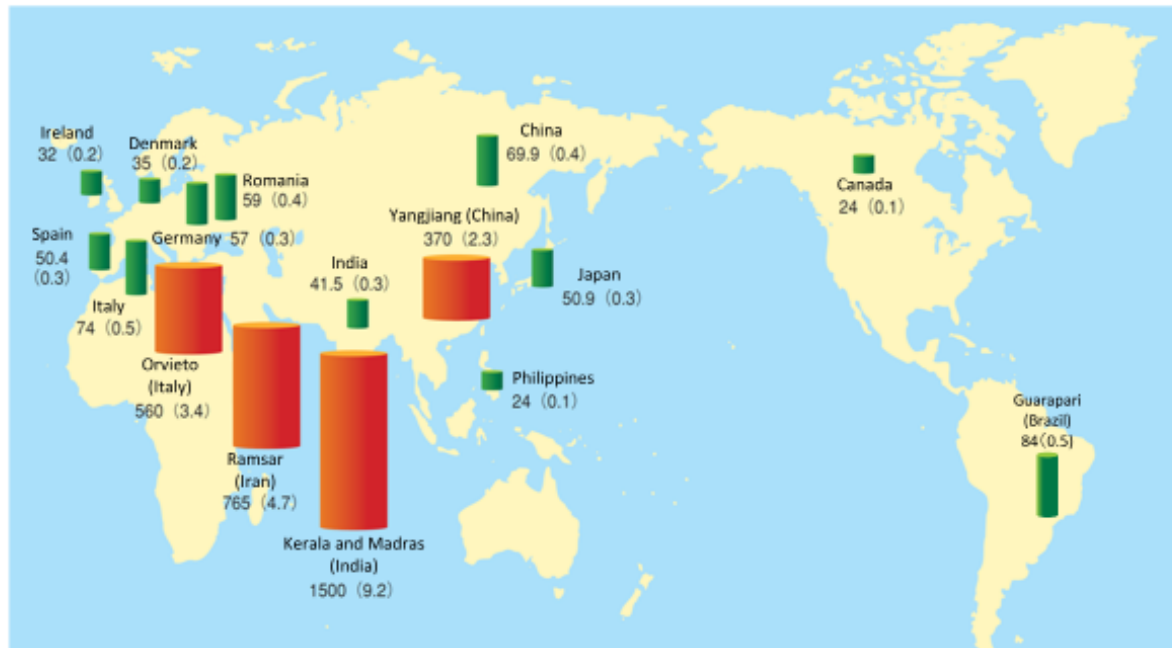
Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

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Ground Radiation (World)

Nanograys/h (mSv/y)

0.7 Sv/gray is used in conversion to effective doses.



Sources: Prepared based on the 2008 UNSCEAR (United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation) Report; and "Environmental Radiation in Daily Life (Calculation of National Doses), ver. 3" (2020), Nuclear Safety Research Association

There are regions around the world where natural radiation is 7 to 30 times higher than in Japan, such as Yangjiang in China, Kerala in India, and Ramsar in Iran. The high levels of natural radiation in these regions are due to the fact that soil there is rich in radioactive materials such as radium, thorium and uranium.

It has been reported that in Guarapari in Brazil, which was previously well-known as a high natural radiation area, ambient dose rates have reduced as a result of asphalt paving for urbanization.

Based on epidemiological studies in China and India, no significant increases in cancer deaths and incidence rates have been reported so far in these regions (p.124 of Vol. 1, "Effects of Long-Term Low-Dose Exposure"). In Ramsar, analysis on cancer risks is underway.

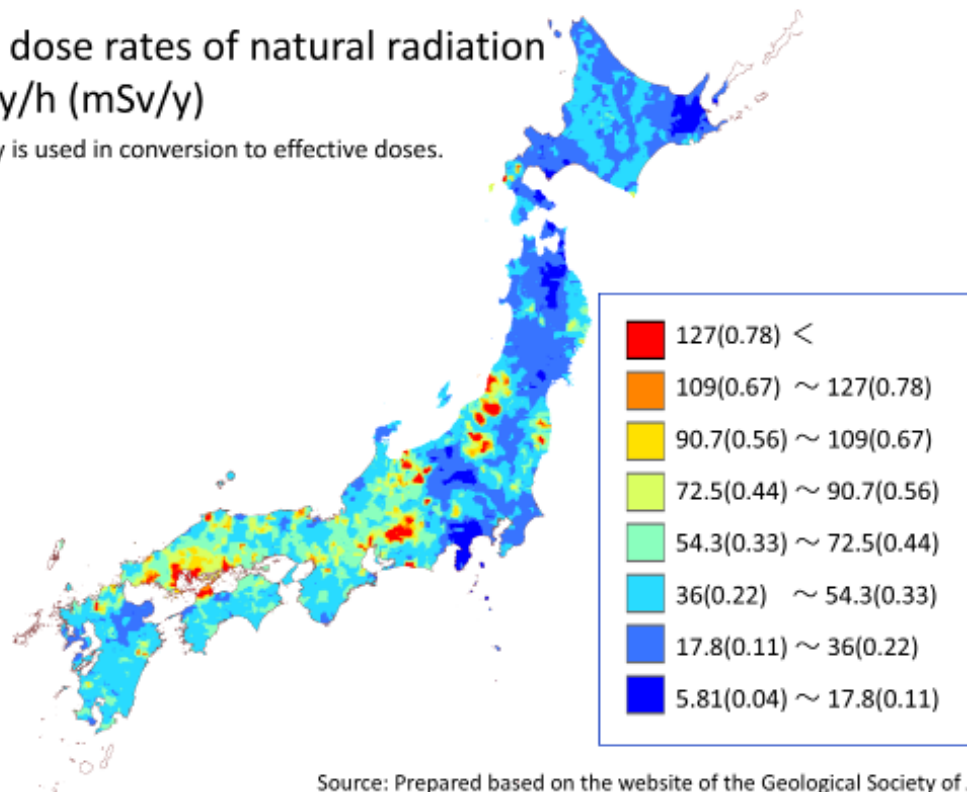
Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

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Ground Radiation (Japan)

Ambient dose rates of natural radiation
Nanogray/h (mSv/y)

- 0.7 Sv/gray is used in conversion to effective doses.



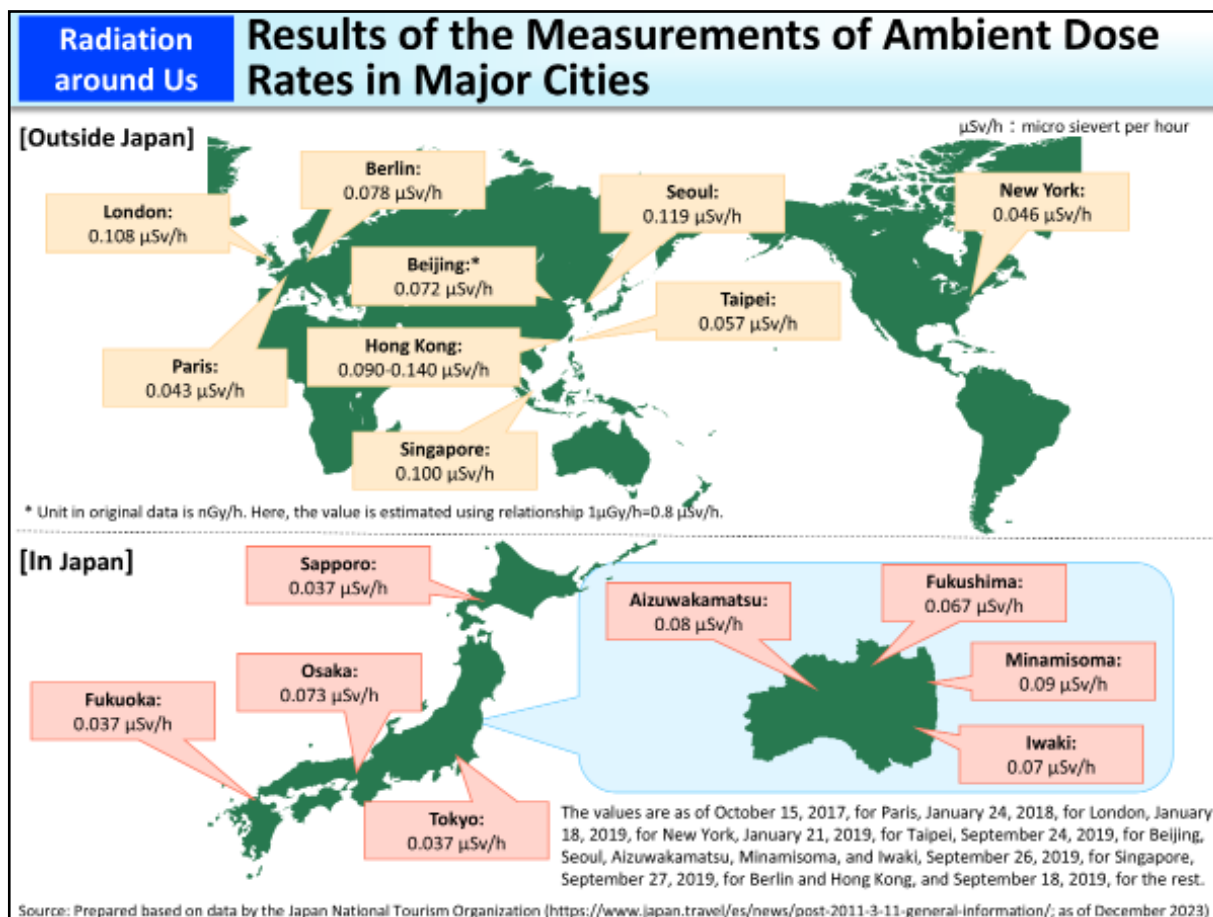
In Japan, like everywhere else, the amount of ground radiation varies from area to area. Comparison of ambient dose rates among different prefectures shows that there is a difference of 0.4 mSv per year between Gifu, where the ambient dose rates are highest, and Kanagawa, where the values are lowest.

In the Kanto Plain, where a fewer types of radionuclides are contained in the ground, the amount of radiation from the ground is generally less. In western Japan, where granite is directly exposed to the ground in many places, the amount of radiation from the ground tends to be about 1.5 times higher than in eastern Japan because granite is relatively rich in radionuclides such as uranium, thorium and potassium.

(Related to p.8 of Vol. 1, “Naturally Occurring or Artificial”)

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These figures show the results of the measurements of ambient dose rates at major cities in and outside Japan. Radiation doses shown in the figures are mostly from 0.03 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$ to 0.14 $\mu\text{Sv/h}$, which reveals that radiation doses vary by region. This is mainly because radiation doses from the earth differ due to differences in soil and rocks in respective regions.

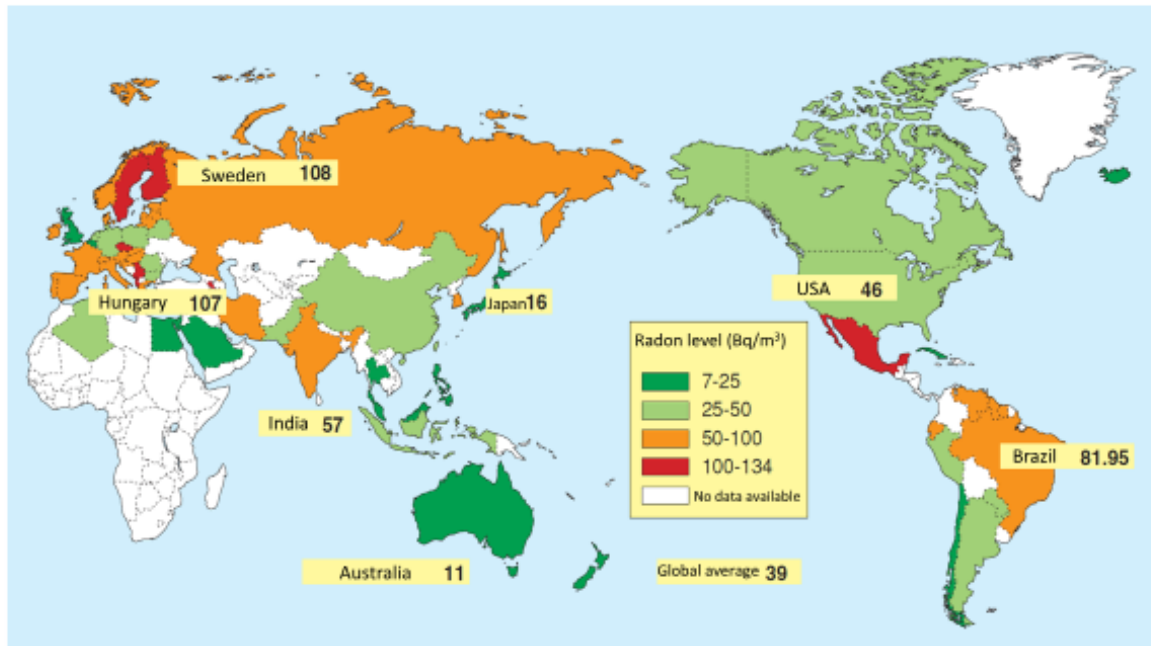
Ambient dose rates in four cities in Fukushima Prefecture decreased significantly over time after Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accident and have become almost the same as those in other major cities in and outside Japan.

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Indoor Radon

Regional differences in exposure from indoor radon
(arithmetic average: Bq/m^3)



Bq/m^3 : becquerels/cubic meter

Source: Prepared based on the 2006 UNSCEAR (United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation) Report

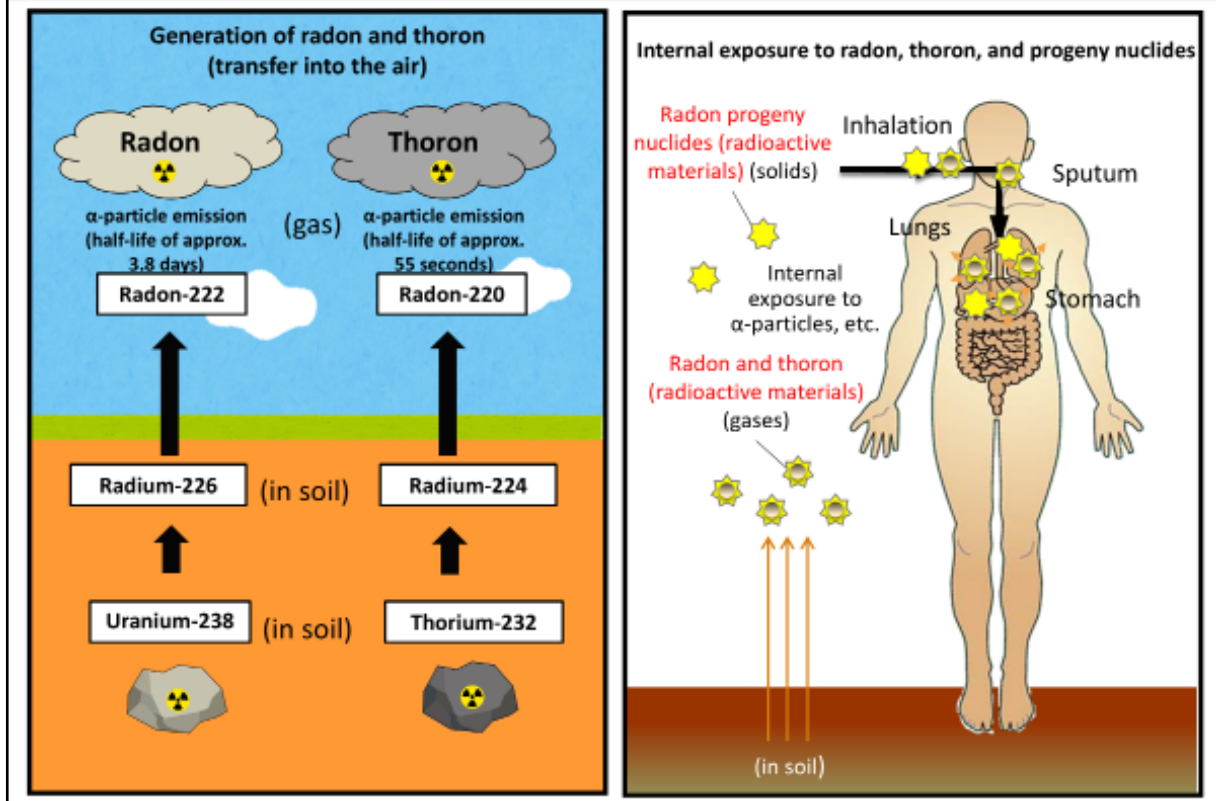
Radon is a radioactive noble gas produced by the alpha-decay of radium, which is universally present under the ground. Since radon is a gas, it is emitted from the ground and seeps into houses (p.71 of Vol. 1, "Internal Exposure to Radon and Thoron through Inhalation").

In areas where people live in masonry houses, such as Europe, indoor radon concentrations are high and exposure doses tend to be high as a result.

The global average of indoor radon concentrations is 39 Bq/m^3 , while Japan has an average value of 16 Bq/m^3 . There are also large regional differences in internal exposure doses from indoor radon.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2015



Radon (Radon-222) and thoron (Radon-220) are gaseous radioactive materials produced through radioactive decay of a radium ore. They enter the human body through inhalation. Radon results from decay of Radium-226 produced in a decay chain (uranium series) that starts from uranium, and thoron results from decay of Radium-224 produced in a decay chain (thorium series) that starts from Thorium-232. Radon has a half-life of approx. 3.8 days and thoron has a half-life of approx. 55 seconds.

Radon and its progeny nuclides are the largest contributors of natural radiation exposure.

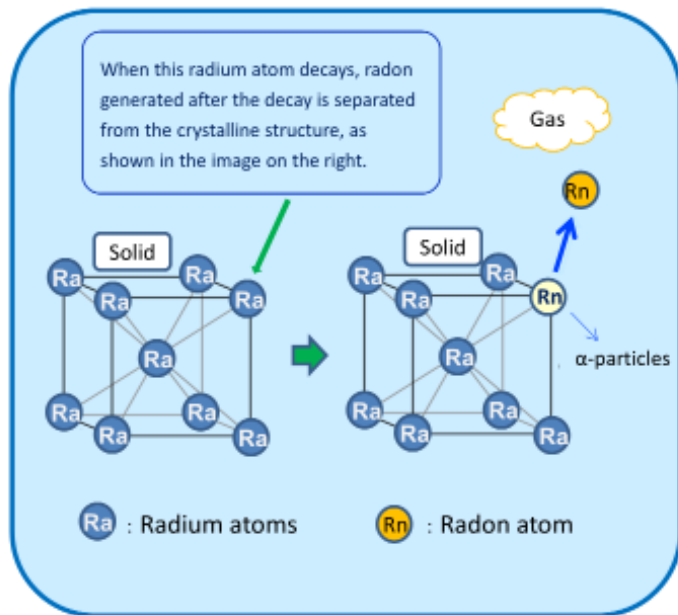
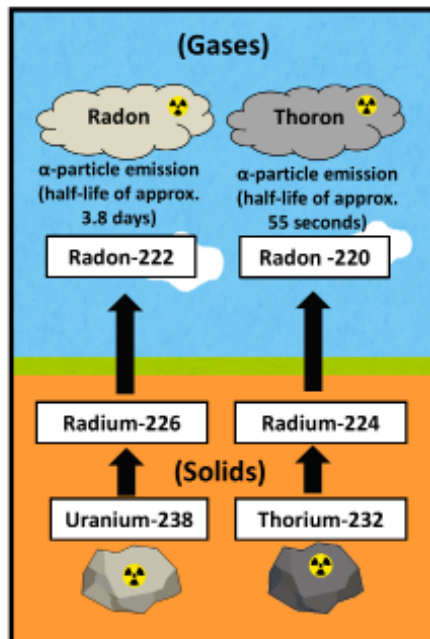
Because radon and thoron diffuse into the air from the ground, building materials, etc. (p.72 of Vol. 1, "Generation of Radon Gas from Solid Radium"), people inhale radon and thoron in their lives on a daily basis. Inhaled radon reaches the lungs and emits α (alpha)-particles, causing internal exposure of the lungs. Radon inhaled into the body further decays into progeny nuclides, which then migrate from the lungs and the esophagus to the digestive organs together with sputum, causing further internal exposure.

Radon contributes less to internal exposure than its progeny nuclides. This is because radon, being a gas, is easily exhaled, while radon daughter nuclides, i.e., radioactive Polonium-218 and Lead-214 that is created through decay of the former, are solids and therefore not easily expelled out of the body once inhaled as they adhere to the alveoli and the bronchial wall surface.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2015

Updated on March 31, 2021

It may seem strange that solid radium directly turns into radon gas. This is caused by radioactive decay that causes atoms to change.



Radium, a radioactive material, is present in a crystal structure called body-centered cubic at room temperature and normal pressure, as shown in the right image.

When radium decays, it emits α (alpha)-particles and turns into radon.

Radon is a chemically stable element, like helium and neon. Being chemically stable or being an inert element means that it stably exists as radon without reacting with other elements to form compounds. Radon has a melting point of approx. -71°C and a boiling point of approx. -62°C and is therefore in a gas form under normal conditions. When radium atoms making up the crystal structure decay into radon atoms, they leave the crystal structure (because the force binding them as a crystal is lost) and come to exist in a gas form. Since radon is an inert gas, it emanates from the ground into the air without reacting with any underground substances.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2016

Radioactive materials
in the bodyRadioactivity concentrations
(Potassium-40) in foods

When body weight is 60kg

Potassium-40	※ 1	4,000Bq
Carbon-14	※ 2	2,500Bq
Rubidium-87	※ 1	500Bq
Tritium	※ 2	100Bq
Lead and polonium	※ 3	20Bq

- ※ 1 Nuclides originating from the Earth
 ※ 2 Nuclides derived from N-14 originating from cosmic rays
 ※ 3 Nuclides of the uranium series originating from the Earth

Rice: 30; Milk: 50; Beef: 100; Fish: 100; Dry milk: 200; Spinach: 200;
 Potato chips: 400; Green tea: 600; Dried shiitake: 700; Dried kelp: 2,000 (Bq/kg)

Bq: becquerels Bq/kg: becquerels/kilogram

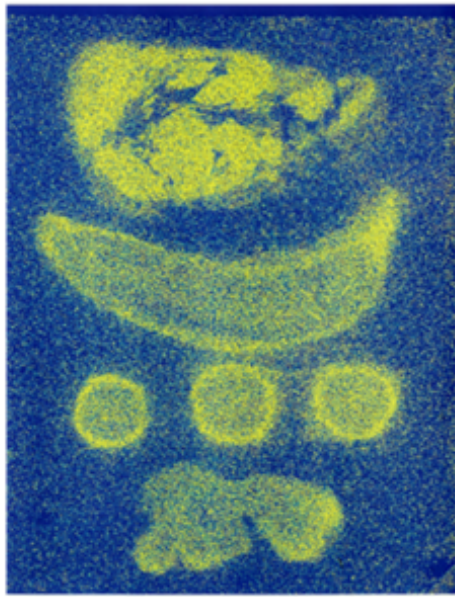
Source: Prepared based on "Research on Data about Living Environment Radiation (1983)," Nuclear Safety Research Association

Potassium is an element necessary for life and is contained in most foods. Because 0.01% of potassium is radioactive, most foods contain radioactive potassium. Radioactive potassium emits β (beta)-particles and γ -rays, causing internal exposure from food intake (p.74 of Vol. 1, "Visualized Radiation"). The internal potassium concentration is held constant, so exposure doses from potassium in foods depend on individuals' physiques and are considered unaffected by diet (p.8 of Vol. 1, "Naturally Occurring or Artificial").

The values for dry foods in the list are those analyzed in their product states, which include the effects of concentration increases due to drying. For example, if the weight decreases to one-tenth through drying, concentration increases by ten times.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on February 28, 2018



Radiographs of pork meat, banana (cut vertically and horizontally), and ginger

Radiation from foods

- Mostly β -particles from Potassium-40
- The natural abundance ratio of Potassium-40* is **0.012%**.
- Potassium-40 has a half-life of **1.26×10^9 years.**

*Percentage of Potassium-40 relative to the total amount of potassium found in nature

Source: Applied Physics Vol.67, No.6, 1998

Potassium-40 contained in foods emits β (beta)-particles and γ -rays.

The distribution of potassium can be found by using an imaging plate¹ and detecting β -particles from Potassium-40.

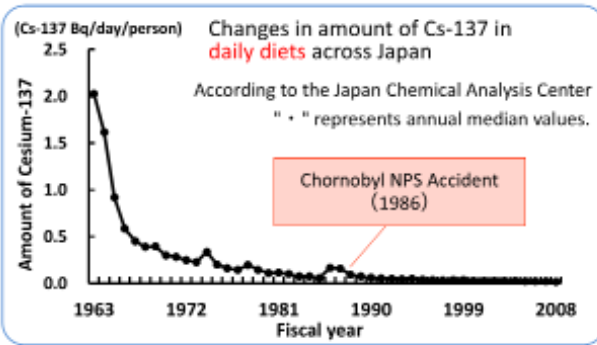
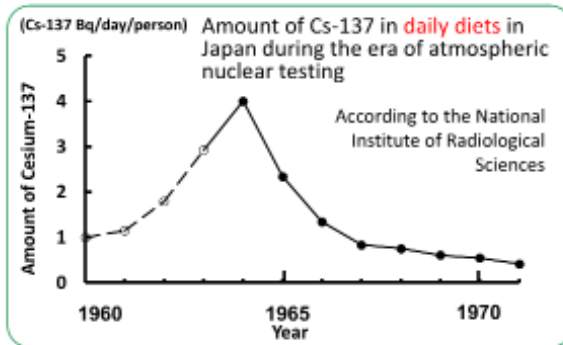
The above image was obtained by placing pieces of pork meat, banana and ginger on an imaging plate and exposing for 25 days while blocking shielding external radiation. The protein part of the pork meat, the peel of the banana, and the buds of the ginger contain relatively large amounts of potassium. It can be seen that the fat portion of the pork meat contains little potassium.

1. An imaging plate is a support medium, such as a plastic sheet, coated with a fluorescent substance that reacts to radiation. By placing a sample containing radioactive materials on a plate for a defined period of time, two-dimensional distribution of radioactivity in the sample can be examined.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2019

Changes in Cesium-137 Concentrations in Foods over Time since before the Accident



*The two studies differ in sampling time and location.



- If an adult keeps consuming the typical diet of the 1960s for a year, internal radiation dose due to Cesium-137 is:

$$4.0 \times 365 \times 0.013 = 19 \mu\text{Sv/y}$$

$$(\text{Bq/day}) (\text{day/year}) (\mu\text{Sv/Bq}) = 0.019 \mu\text{Sv/y}$$

- (Japanese average)
Annual internal exposure dose due to natural radiation in foods is:
0.99 mSv/y

Source: Prepared based on the "Environmental Radiation in Daily Life (Calculation of National Doses), ver. 3" (2020), Nuclear Safety Research Association

Atmospheric nuclear tests were carried out around the world from 1945 to 1980. As a result, large amounts of artificial radionuclides were released into the air and fell to Japan as well (p.78 of Vol. 1, "Effects of Radioactive Fallout due to Atmospheric Nuclear Testing"). Radioactivity in daily diets has been measured across Japan in order to find out what effects the artificial radionuclides would have on health.

Meals people actually consume are used as samples to measure radioactivity in daily diets, and this practice is useful in estimating and evaluating internal exposure doses from meals.

The amount of Cesium-137 in daily diets was highest around 1963, the year when nuclear testing, particularly in the atmosphere, was banned. It dropped sharply afterwards, and in 1975, it reduced to about a tenth of the peak amount. While there was a slight increase in 1986 because of the Chornobyl NPS Accident, the amount went down slowly until the 2000s.

If an adult were to keep consuming a typical diet of the 1960s, which had the highest level of Cesium-137, Japanese people's internal exposure dose due to Cesium-137 would be as follows:

$$4.0 (\text{Bq/day}) \times 365 (\text{day/year}) \times 0.013 (\mu\text{Sv/Bq}) = 19 \mu\text{Sv/y} = 0.019 \text{ mSv/y}$$

This value is about 2% of Japanese people's internal exposure dose (0.99 mSv/y) due to natural radiation in foods.

Because the above two studies differ in the location where samples (daily diets) were taken and the number of samples, there is a difference in their numerical values.

(The black dots in the graph (right) showing changes in amount of Cesium-137 in daily diets over time across Japan represent annual median values.)

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2017

Updated on March 31, 2024

Radiation Doses from Medical Diagnosis

Type of examination	Diagnostic reference levels ^{*1}	Actual exposure dose ^{*2}	
		Dose	Type of dose
General imaging: Front chest	0.4 mGy (less than 100 kV)	0.06 mSv	Effective dose
Mammography (mean glandular dose)	2.4 mGy	Around 2 mGy	Equivalent dose (Mean glandular dose)
Fluoroscopy	IVR (InterVentional Radiology): Equipment reference fluoroscopic dose rate 17 mGy/min	Gastric fluoroscopy: 10 mSv/min (25 to 190 sec, varies depending on operators and subjects) ^{*3}	Effective dose
Dental imaging (Intraoral radiography)	From 1.0 mGy at the frontal teeth of the mandible to 2.0 mGy at the molar teeth of the maxilla (In either case, incident air kerma (Ka,i) [mGy] is measured)	Around 2 - 10 μ Sv	Effective dose
X-ray CT scan	Adult head simple routine: 77 mGy (CTDIvol)	Around 5 - 30 mSv	Effective dose
	Child (age 5 - 9), head: 55 mGy (CTDIvol)		
Nuclear scanning	Value for each radioactive medicine	Around 0.5 - 15 mSv	Effective dose
PET scan	Value for each radioactive medicine	Around 2 - 20 mSv	Effective dose

*1: "National Diagnostic Reference Levels in Japan (2020) (Japan DRLs 2020)," J-RIME, July 3, 2020 (partially updated on August 31, 2020)

*2: "Q&A on Medical Exposure Risks and Protection Regarding Medical Exposure from CT Scans, etc.," National Institutes for Quantum and Radiological Science and Technology (<https://www.qst.go.jp/site/qms/1889.html>)

*3: "Gastric Fluoroscopy" in "X-ray Medical Checkup" in "Basic Knowledge on Medical Radiation," Kitasato University Hospital, Radiology Department Prepared based on materials *1, *2 and *3 above

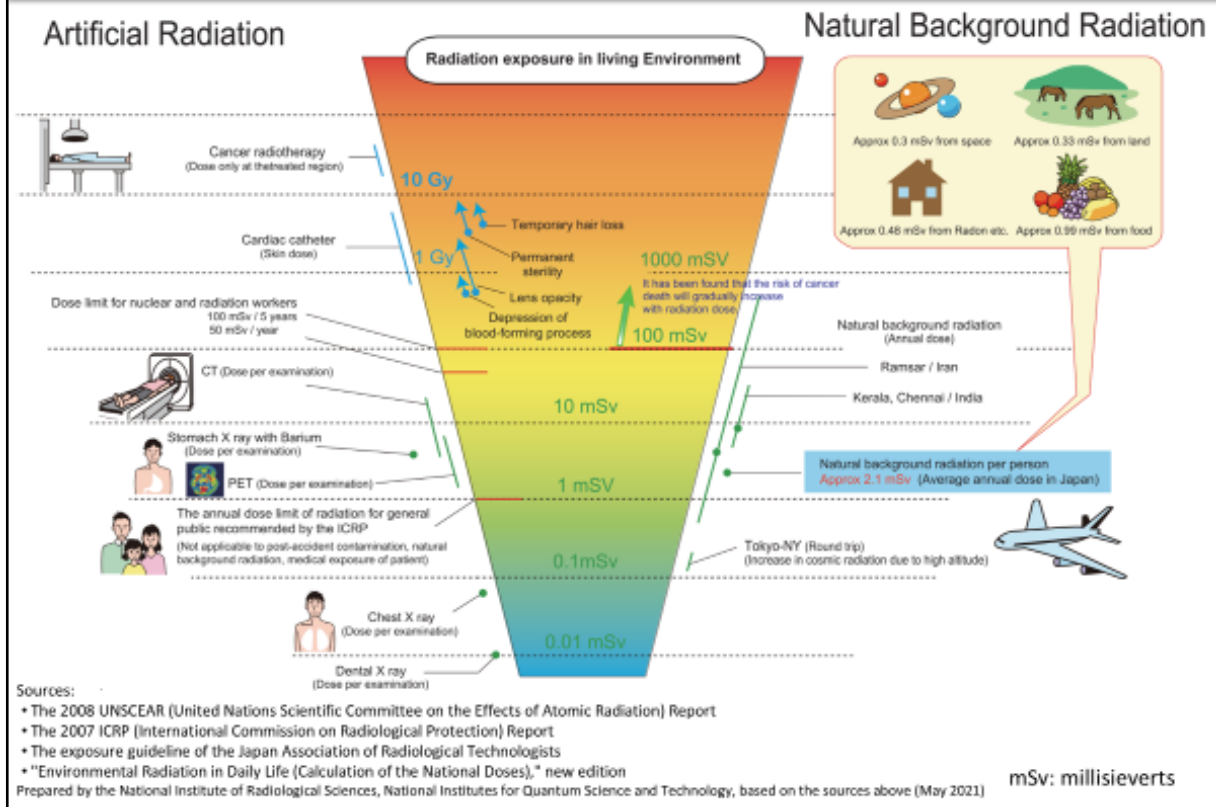
Exposure doses from radiological examinations vary by the types of examinations. Some examinations, such as dental imaging, only involve very slight, local exposure, while some other examinations, such as X-ray CT scans and nuclear scanning, involve relatively high exposure doses. Even with the same type of examination, doses could vary widely depending on the medical institution. It is therefore recommended to use the diagnostic reference levels as criteria for determining whether radiation doses from medical diagnosis are appropriate or not. If the average radiation dose of a medical institution greatly deviates from the diagnostic reference levels, the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) recommends that irradiation conditions for the examination be reconsidered.

Some countries are already using the diagnostic reference levels. In Japan, the Japan Association of Radiological Technologists issued a medical exposure guideline (reduction targets) in 2000, in which they compiled values equivalent to the diagnostic reference levels. It was updated in 2006 as the 2006 medical exposure guideline. The Japan Network for Research and Information on Medical Exposures (J-RIME)¹ established Japan's first diagnostic reference levels based on the results of surveys conducted by participating organizations. For the latest diagnostic reference levels, the "National Diagnostic Reference Levels in Japan (2020) (Japan DRLs 2020)" was published on July 3, 2020 (partially updated on August 31, 2020).

1. The Japan Network for Research and Information on Medical Exposures (J-RIME) started in 2010 as a base for establishing a medical exposure protection system that matches Japan's circumstances, by gathering expert opinions through cooperation from academic societies and associations, and collecting and sharing domestic and international research information on medical exposures. J-RIME's activities include collecting data on medical exposure, such as exposure doses from radiation therapy and risk assessment, to get a picture of medical exposures in Japan, and building an appropriate protection system for medical exposure in Japan while taking international trends into account.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013
Updated on March 31, 2024

Comparison of Exposure Doses (Simplified Chart)



Comparison of radiation doses in daily life shows that doses from one single event and annual doses are mostly on the order of millisieverts, except for special cases such as radiation therapy (p.76 of Vol. 1, "Radiation Doses from Medical Diagnosis").

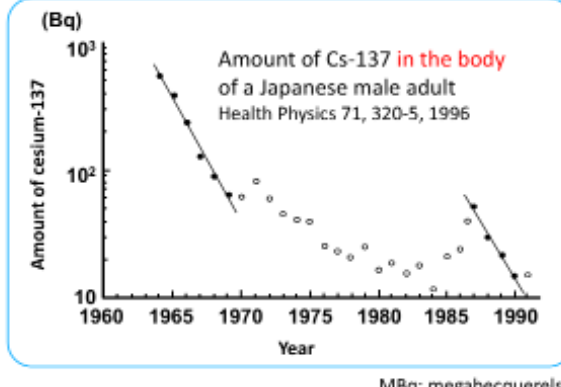
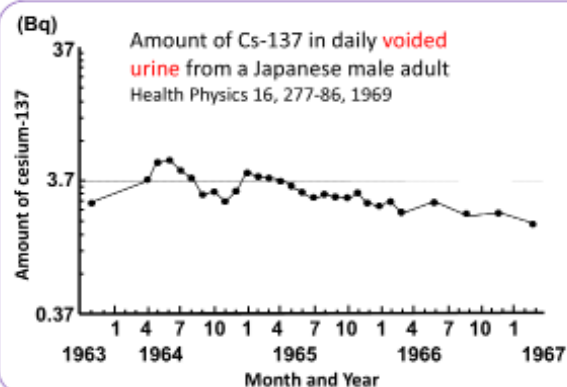
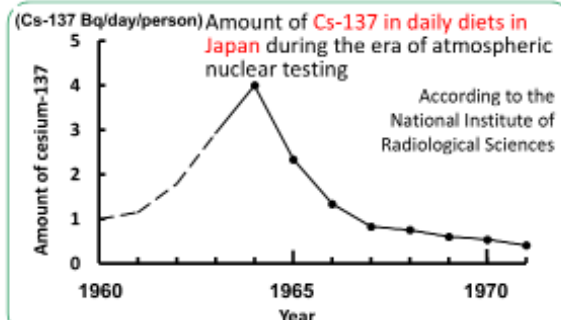
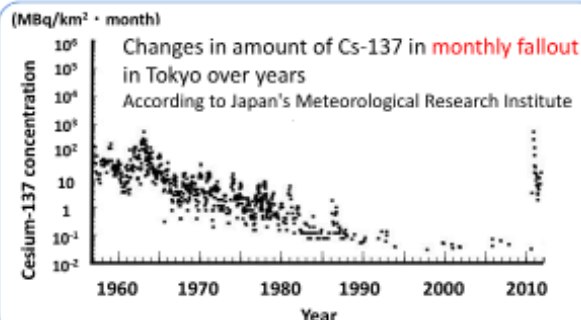
Exposure doses found to have health effects on people are considered to be at levels exceeding 100 millisieverts.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2022

Internal radioactivity: Body weight: 60 kg

Potassium-40: 4,000 Bq; Carbon-14: 2,500 Bq; Rubidium-87: 520 Bq; Tritium: 100 Bq



MBq: megabecquerels

Large amounts of artificial radionuclides were released into the environment in the era during which atmospheric nuclear testing was frequently conducted. These artificial radionuclides were spread all around the world as they were carried by air currents, and gradually fell onto the surface of the Earth from the atmosphere. Such radioactive falling matter is called fallout. The amount of fallout was highest in 1963, just before the ban of atmospheric nuclear testing, and has been decreasing since then.

Because there is a time lag between contamination of foods with cesium and their consumption, the amount of radioactive cesium in daily diets was highest in 1964, then dropped sharply by 1967, and has been decreasing relatively slowly since then.

Like the amount of cesium in daily diets, the amounts of Cesium-137 in urine and the body were also highest in 1964. An increase in the amount of cesium in the body was also found among Japanese people as a result of the influence of the Chernobyl NPS Accident.

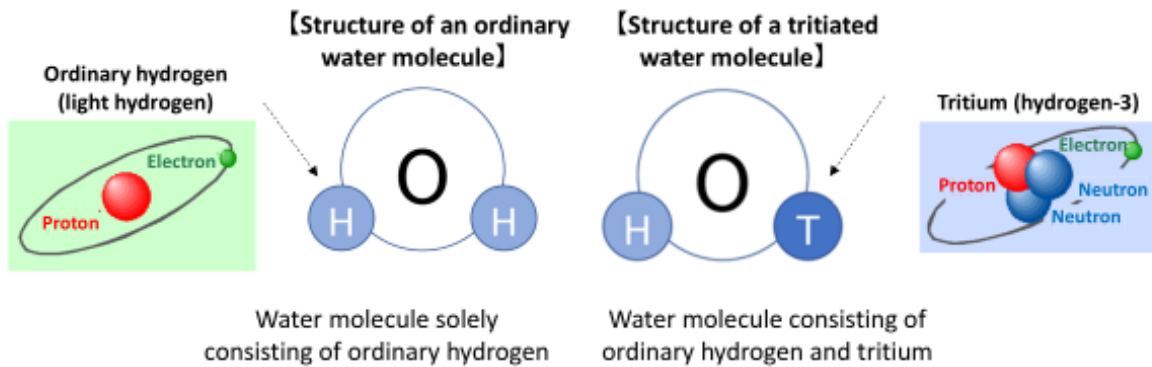
As a result of atmospheric nuclear testing during the aforementioned era, plutonium and Strontium-90, etc. were released into the environment, in addition to radioactive cesium. These radionuclides still exist in soil, albeit only slightly.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2024

Characteristics of Tritium

Tritium is a radioisotope of hydrogen, called "hydrogen-3," and exists around us mostly being contained in water molecules. β -particles emitted from tritium only have low energy (18.6 keV at the largest) and can be shielded with a sheet of paper.



Source: Prepared based on the "Important Stories on Decommissioning 2018" by the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, METI, the "Tritiated Water Task Force Report" by the Tritiated Water Task Force (2016), and the "Scientific Characteristics of Tritium (draft)" by the Subcommittee on Handling of the ALPS Treated Water



The water processed with the multi-nuclide removal equipment, also called the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS), or other equipment, at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS, still contains tritium, which is a radioactive material.

Tritium is a radioisotope of hydrogen, called "hydrogen-3." As tritium combines with oxygen to form water molecules just as ordinary hydrogen does, it exists around us contained in water molecules, and is also found in water vapor in the air, rainwater, seawater, and tap water. It is difficult to remove tritium by ALPS as it exists as part of water molecules. Tritium is generated in nature by cosmic rays in addition to being artificially generated through operations of nuclear power plants.

Tritium emits β (beta)-particles, a type of radiation, but β -particles emitted from tritium have low energy and can be shielded with a sheet of paper. Therefore, external exposure to tritium is unlikely to exert any influence on the human body. A biological half-life for water containing tritium is ten days, and even if it is ingested, it will be eliminated from the body promptly and will not accumulate in any specific organs (p.31 of Vol. 1, "Radioactive Materials Derived from Nuclear Accidents"). The committed effective dose coefficient when orally ingesting tritium is 0.000018 $\mu\text{Sv/Bq}$, a smaller value compared with other radionuclides (p.57 of Vol. 1, "Conversion Factors to Effective Doses").

[Reference materials]

Basic knowledge on tritium:

- Contaminated water management in Fukushima: Top priority on safety and security; Measure (ii) What is "tritium"?

<https://www.enecho.meti.go.jp/about/special/johoteikyo/osensuitaisaku02.html> (in Japanese)

Influence of tritium on the human body:

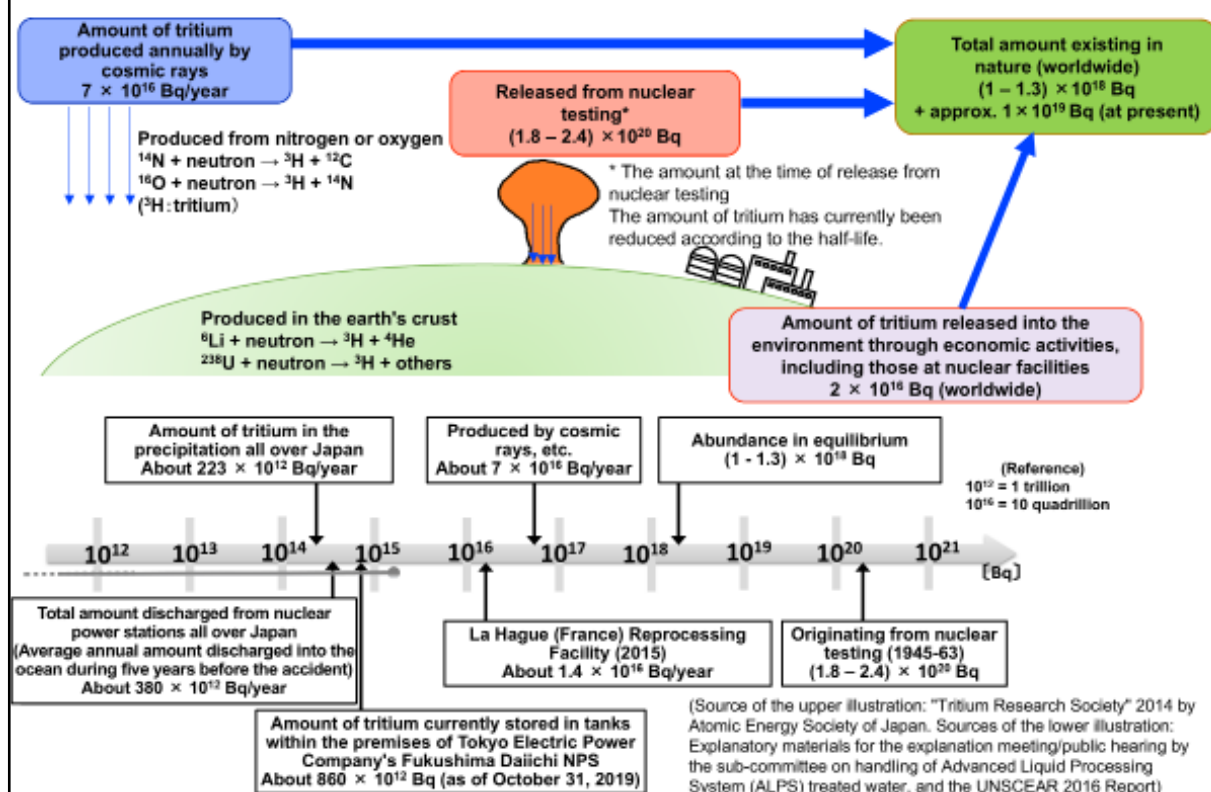
- Top priority on safety and security; Measure (iii) Explanation of tritium and radiation exposure

<https://www.enecho.meti.go.jp/about/special/johoteikyo/osensuitaisaku03.html> (in Japanese)

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2019

Updated on March 31, 2024

Amount of Tritium Existing in the Environment



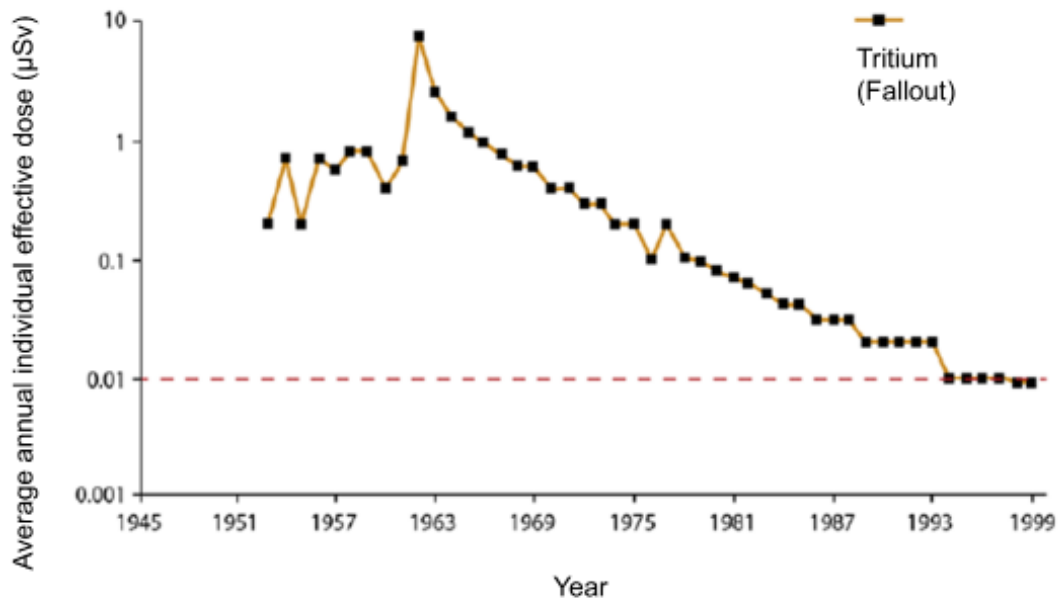
Tritium (^3H) is a radioisotope of hydrogen (with a half-life of about 12.3 years) and emits weak radiation (β -particles) (p.79 of Vol. 1, "Characteristics of Tritium").

In nature, about seventy quadrillion (7×10^{16}) Bq of tritium is produced annually by cosmic rays, etc. on earth. In the past nuclear testing (1945 to 1963), tritium of 1.8 to 2.4×10^{20} Bq was released. In addition, tritium is discharged daily from facilities such as nuclear power stations around the world and the annual amount of tritium released from nuclear power stations around the world is 2×10^{16} Bq. Before the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Daiichi NPS Accident, the annual amount of tritium released from nuclear power stations all over Japan was 380×10^{12} Bq (which is the average annual amount discharged into the ocean during the five years before the accident). Abundance in equilibrium (abundance when generation and disintegration¹ stay in equilibrium) in the environment is estimated to be 1 to 1.3×10^{18} Bq, and the current abundance of tritium derived from nuclear testing and released from nuclear facilities, etc. is estimated to be 1×10^{19} Bq. The released tritium exists mostly as hydrogen that makes up water molecules and it is also contained in water vapor in the atmosphere, rainwater, sea water and tap water. The annual amount of tritium contained in the precipitation in Japan is estimated to be about 223×10^{12} Bq.

1. The phenomenon wherein a radionuclide emits radiation and transforms into a different nuclide (p.10 of Vol. 1, "Parent and Daughter Nuclides"). Tritium transforms into helium through disintegration.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2021

Updated on March 31, 2024



Source: UNSCEAR 2016 Report, Annex C-Biological effects of selected internal emitters-Tritium

During the period from 1950 to 1963, nuclear weapon tests were conducted and caused a large amount of radioactive fallout across the globe. As a result, the average annual individual doses from tritium increased with the peak value of 7.2 μSv in 1962. After that, the amount of tritium decreased with the half-life, which resulted in little effect on the individual dose. In 1999, it became 0.01 μSv , which was about one-seven hundredth of the peak value.

In the nuclear testing, not only tritium but also cesium, plutonium and strontium were released into the environment.

According to the 2016 report by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), the epidemiological studies conducted so far have not confirmed any tritium-specific risk about the effects of public exposure to tritium. Additionally, from the fact that the incidence of childhood leukemia has not increased since the early 1960s when nuclear tests were frequently conducted, it is considered that there is a low possibility that the health risk by exposure to tritium is underestimated.

(Related page: p.78 of Vol. 1, "Effects of Radioactive Fallout due to Atmospheric Nuclear Testing")

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2021