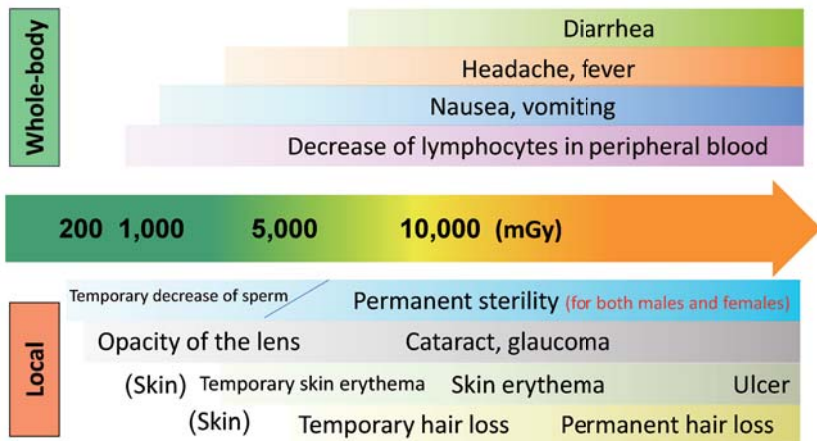


Whole-body Exposure and Local Exposure



Source: Prepared based on the report of the Health Management Study Committee of the Nuclear Safety Commission (2000), etc.

Radiation exposure at levels exceeding 100 mGy at one time may cause effects on the human body due to cell deaths. Organs highly sensitive to radiation are more likely to be affected with a small amount of radiation.

As the testes in which cells are dividing actively are highly sensitive to radiation, even low doses of radiation at the levels of 100 to 150 mGy temporarily decrease the number of sperm and cause transient sterility. Bone marrow is also highly sensitive to radiation and lymphocytes in blood may decrease due to exposure to radiation even less than 1,000 mGy (= 1 Gy). However, these effects are naturally subdued.

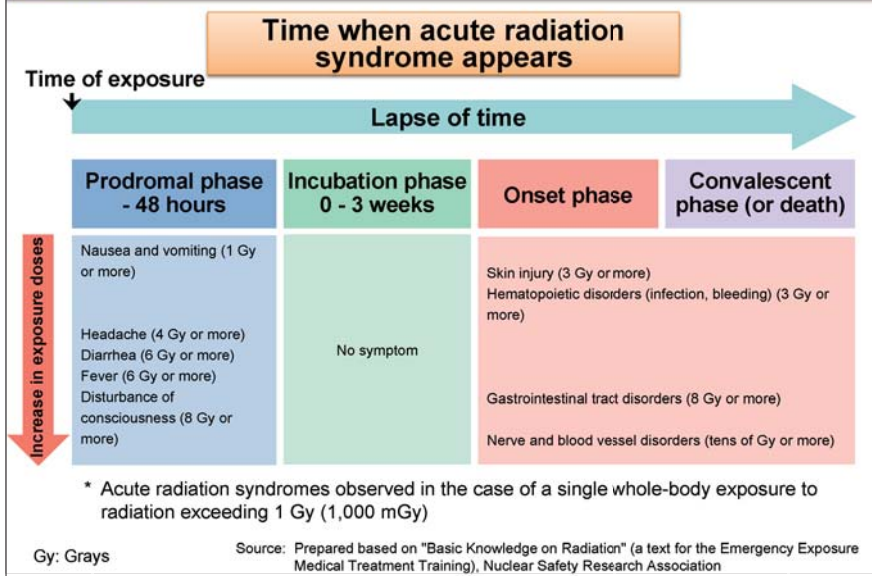
On the other hand, clinical symptoms may appear that require clinical care after exposure to radiation of more than 2,000 mGy at one time.

In the case of local exposure, disorders appear in the exposed organs.
(Related to p.88 of Vol. 1, "Damage and Repair of DNA")

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2019

Acute Radiation Syndromes



A single whole-body exposure to radiation exceeding 1 Gy (1,000 mGy) causes disorders in various organs and tissues, leading to complicated clinical developments. This series of disorders in organs is called acute radiation syndrome, which typically follows a course from the prodromal phase to the incubation phase, the onset phase, and finally to the convalescent phase or to death in the worst case.

From prodromal symptoms that appear within 48 hours after the exposure, exposure doses can roughly be estimated (p.96 of Vol. 1, "Prodromal Phase of Acute Radiation Syndrome and Exposure Doses").

In the onset phase after the incubation phase, disorders appear in the order of hematopoietic organ, gastrointestinal tract, skin, and nerves and blood vessels, as doses increase. Disorders mainly appear in organs and tissues highly sensitive to radiation. In general, the larger the exposure dose, the shorter the incubation phase.

Skin covers a large area of 1.3 to 1.8 m² of the whole body of adults. Epidermis, which is the result of gradual differentiation of basal cells that are created at the basal stratum, finally becomes a stratum corneum and is separated from the body surface as scurf.

It is said to take approx. 20 to 40 days until basal cells move from the basal stratum to the skin surface, which means*1 that two to more than four weeks is required for exposed subcutaneous cells existing in the stratum corneum to the basal stratum to come up to the skin surface. Therefore, skin erythema may appear immediately after exposure depending on radiation intensity, but skin injury generally appears after the lapse of a few weeks or more (p.25 of Vol. 1, "External Exposure and Skin").

*1: Source: United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) 1988 "Radiation Sources, Effects and Risks," translated by the National Institute for Radiological Sciences (Jitsugyo-koho Co., Ltd.; March 1990)

Prodromal Phase of Acute Radiation Syndrome and Exposure Doses

Prodromal phase and exposure dose

Symptom	Mild (1-2 Gy)	Moderate (2-4 Gy)	Severe (4-6 Gy)	Very severe (6-8 Gy)	Lethal (> 8 Gy)
Vomiting	2 hours or later after exposure (Rate of incidence) Up to 50%	1 to 2 hours 70 to 90%	Within 1 hour 100%	Within 30 minutes 100%	Within 10 minutes 100%
Diarrhea	None	None	Moderate	Severe	Severe
Headache	Very mild	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Severe
Consciousness	Unaffected	Unaffected	Unaffected	Affected	Loss of consciousness
Body temperature	Normal	Slight fever	Fever	High fever	High fever

Gy: Grays

Source: Prepared based on IAEA Safety Reports Series No.2 "Diagnosis and Treatment of Radiation Injuries" (1998)

From prodromal symptoms that appear within 48 hours after the exposure, exposure doses can roughly be estimated in the case of acute exposure. Exposure to radiation of 1 to 2 Gy may cause loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. In addition, very mild headache appears. Exposure to radiation of 2 to 4 Gy may cause vomiting, mild headache or slight fever (1 to 3 hours, 10 to 80% incidence). Exposure of 4 to 6 Gy causes 100% incidence of vomiting within one hour after exposure and also causes moderate diarrhea and headache as well as 80 to 100% incidence of fever. Exposure of 6 to 8 Gy causes 100% incidence of vomiting within 30 minutes and also causes severe diarrhea/headache as well as 100% incidence of high fever. Furthermore, disturbance of consciousness may appear. Exposure to radiation exceeding 8 Gy causes 100% incidence of vomiting within 10 minutes and causes symptoms such as severe diarrhea/headache, high fever and loss of consciousness.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2021

Threshold Values for Various Effects

Threshold acute absorbed doses of γ -rays

Disorders	Organs/Tissues	Incubation period	Threshold value (Gy)*
Temporary sterility	Testis	3 to 9 weeks	Approx. 0.1
Permanent sterility	Testis	3 weeks	Approx. 6
	Ovary	Within 1 week	Approx. 3
Deterioration of hemopoietic capacity	Bone marrow	3 to 7 days	Approx. 0.5
Skin rubor	Skin (large area)	1 to 4 weeks	3 to 6 or lower
Skin burn	Skin (large area)	2 to 3 weeks	5 to 10
Temporary hair loss	Skin	2 to 3 weeks	Approx. 4
Cataract (failing vision)	Eyes	20 years or longer	Approx. 0.5

* Threshold doses for symptoms with clear clinical abnormalities (doses causing effects on 1% of people)

Source: Prepared based on the 2007 Recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP), and ICRP Report 118 (2012)

Sensitivity to radiation differs by organ (p.92 of Vol. 1, "Radiosensitivity of Organs and Tissues").

The most sensitive organs include the testes. When the testes are exposed to γ -rays or other types of radiation exceeding 0.1 Gy (100 mGy) at one time, this may cause temporary sterility with a temporary decrease in the number of sperm, which is due to radiation damage to cells in the testes that create sperm.

Also if bone marrow is irradiated by more than 0.5 Gy (500 mGy) at one time, the hematopoietic function is impaired and a total number of blood cells may decrease.

Some deterministic effects (tissue reactions), such as cataract, take several years to appear.

The threshold dose for cataract had been set at 1.5 Gy, but the ICRP revised this value downward to approx. 0.5 Gy and set a new equivalent dose limit for the eye lens for occupational exposures.

Included in this reference material on March 31, 2013

Updated on March 31, 2021