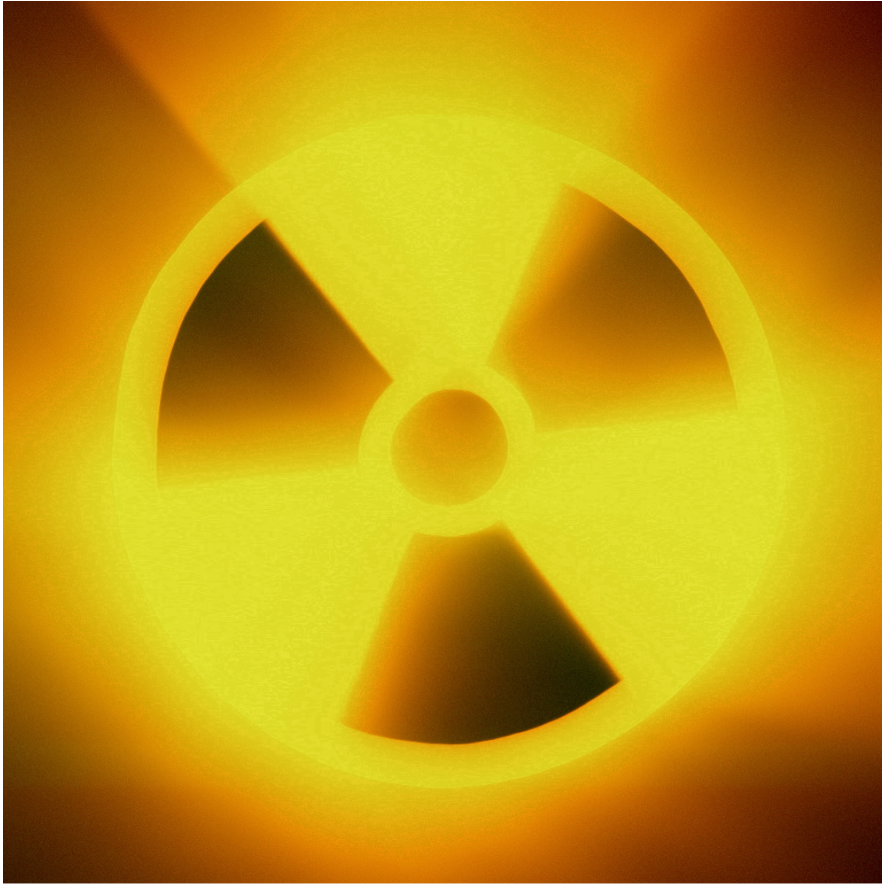




Radiation Exposure



Overview

Radiation is a form of energy that can pass through our bodies. We're exposed to low levels of it all the time. Minerals, electrical power lines and cell phones are all sources. It even comes to us from space. These sources don't usually cause harm. But too much radiation damages your body's cells. It can cause cancer.

Medical sources

You should know that some medical tests and procedures use radiation. CT scans, X-rays, fluoroscopy and other types of imaging expose you to it. Doctors also use radiation to kill cancer cells. We only do these things when needed. And, your care team makes sure you're as safe as possible.

Radiation sickness

In rare cases, people have been exposed to a very large dose of radiation. We've seen it during nuclear disasters and war. This type of exposure causes a lot of damage to the body's cells. We call this "radiation sickness." It often leads to death within days or weeks. Those who survive may develop cancer later.

Conclusion

Most of us don't need to worry about radiation in our daily lives. But there are some things you can do to limit your exposure. Make sure you know the risks and benefits of medical tests and procedures that use radiation. There may be other options you can choose. Use a speaker or a hands-free device when talking on a cell phone. If you live in a house, have it tested for radon. If the radon level is too high, take steps to lower it. And if there's a radiation emergency in your area, follow the advice of officials.