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SANTA CLARA COUNTY (CA) NEWSLETTER TO MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS



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No Current Risk of Radiation Reaching California

As the disaster in Japan continues to unfold, concerns have been raised about windblown radiation making it to California. State and federal experts and authorities agree - there is currently no danger to California residents from Japan's nuclear emergency, and no reason for residents to be concerned about possible radiation effects.

Please know that given the current situation:

- There is no risk of windblown nuclear radiation for California.
- Federal and State agencies are closely monitoring the situation.
- Our local Public Health Department will be informed if there are increased levels of radiation.
- Potassium iodide tablets are not needed and not recommended.

The [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) is closely monitoring the situation and working with authorities and experts with the US Department of Energy, US Environmental Protection Agency, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the California Emergency Management Agency. State and Federal agencies conduct weekly air tests at 10 sites around California. These and other tests (food and water are tested monthly) are used to determine if any unusual spikes or increases in radiation have occurred. CDPH is currently looking at the timing and frequency of their testing as the situation in Japan continues.

According to State and Federal authorities, there has not been a major release of radiation into the atmosphere due to the problems with the nuclear reactors in Japan. The current level of radiation being released, while above what is normally accepted, is a threat to only the people in the vicinity of the nuclear power plant in Japan.

Distance is our friend. Given the thousands of miles between us and Japan, we do not expect to find any harmful levels of radioactivity in our state. The Santa Clara County Public Health Department is in contact with the State, and the State will let us know if the situation changes. If that were to happen, the public would be notified immediately about any precautionary measures that should be taken. In the unlikely event of radiation contamination in our community, California has a response plan for radiological emergencies and would have access to the national stockpile of potassium iodide, which would be recommended for those at highest risk of illness.

Since there is no present danger to the residents of Santa Clara County, there is no need for anyone to take potassium iodide. It is important to know that taking potassium iodide may be harmful for some people, particularly those with a thyroid disease and those who are allergic to it. If you have a seafood or shellfish allergy - it can mean that you are allergic to potassium iodide. Also, many people may have an undiagnosed condition, taking potassium iodide may cause them health problems.

If you want to know more about this situation, you can stay informed by going to the [California Department of Public Health website](#) or you can call the CDPH public information hotline at 1-916-341-3947.