



Medical Information for Navy and Marine Corps Service Members and Dependents Returning from Japan (19 March 2011)

Background: *On 11 March 2011 Japan experienced a 9.0 magnitude earthquake that damaged several Japanese Civilian Nuclear Power Plants resulting in the release of radioactive material at the Fukushima Daiichi site, located approximately 192 miles north of Yokosuka Naval Base. The following is guidance for service members and their dependents who have evacuated from Japan to the continental United States.*

Q. I have just returned from Japan. Am I contaminated by radioactive material?

A. Depending on their locations while in Japan, it is possible that some persons evacuated were exposed to low levels of radiation or have small levels of radioactive material on their bodies, clothes or belongings.

Q. How will I know if I am contaminated?

A. Human senses cannot detect radiation. The levels of radiation or radioactive material one may have been exposed to are so small as to be harmless without any adverse effects.

Q. If contamination is possible what should I do when I return?

A. Persons returning to the United States from Japan are advised simply to shower upon return, wash all clothing and wipe down the outsides of suitcases or other personal belongings carried during transit. Any rags used for cleaning should also be washed. This should be more than sufficient to remove any residual externally deposited radioactivity that may be present. Children and pets should also be bathed and any clothing washed.

Q. Do I need to seek medical attention?

A. No, medical attention is not required but Navy Medical Treatment Facilities (MTF) are available to any beneficiary who may like to be evaluated to alleviate any concerns. The levels of radiation or radioactive material one may have been exposed to are so small as to be harmless without any adverse effects. However, if you are concerned, your local Navy MTF can assist you and answer your questions. Although there are no health concerns, your radiological exposure needs to be accurately documented. As such, you will need to see your local MTF to complete this process.

Q. What should I expect when I see my MTF to have my exposure documented?

A. Will complete a questionnaire and have an interview with a health care provider. It may also involve a scan of the body using equipment that can detect minute levels of radiation.



Q. I am pregnant. Do I require any other radiation screening or precautions?

A. No. The levels of radiation or radioactive material one may have been exposed to are so small as to be harmless without any adverse effects. Bathing and cleaning your clothes and belongings are all you should require. However, if you are concerned, your local Navy Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) can assist you and answer your questions.

Continuity of your prenatal care is very important. It is strongly recommended, that upon returning, you contact the nearest MTF to resume your obstetrical care, especially if you had a history of complications to your pregnancy, or if you have other illness or symptoms of concern. If you are at term (close to delivery date) and have evacuated to a location where no military MTFs are available, you should contact Tricare (<http://www.tricare.mil/contacts/>) who is standing by to assist in setting up your care.

Q. Is it safe to breastfeed?

A. Yes. The levels of possible radiation exposures are very small and do not pose a risk to your breastfeeding infant.

Q. I have small children. Do they require special precautions or screening for radiation?

A. All of the measures described (bathing, washing clothes and personal effects) are sufficient to remove any residual externally deposited radioactivity that may be present. For parents with infants and toddlers, you should pay close attention to cleaning items that the child may put in his or her mouth (pacifiers, teething rings, etc.) and all toys. While medical attention is not required, Navy Medical Treatment Facilities (MTF) are available to any beneficiary who may like to be evaluated to alleviate any concerns.

Q. Where can I go for more information?

A. The following links may provide useful information:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Emergency Preparedness, Radiation Exposures:** <http://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/>
- **Tricare:** <http://www.tricare.mil/tsunami/default.aspx>
- **Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami Resources:** http://www.nmcphc.med.navy.mil/Tsunami_Info/Tsunami_Info.aspx