WHAT PRECAUTIONS CAN BE TAKEN FOR A RADIATION EMERGENCY?

In case of a Radiation Emergency be sure to know your community’s emergency plan and possible emergency routes. Other emergency preparations include:

- Develop a family emergency plan and be sure every member knows what to do.
- Prepare a “shelter in place” above ground, with limited windows and doors.
- Prepare and store emergency supplies such as:
  - A flashlight with extra batteries
  - A portable radio with extra batteries
  - Bottled water
  - Canned and packaged food
  - A hand-operated can opener
  - A first-aid kit and essential prescription medications
  - Personal items such as paper towels, garbage bags and toilet paper
- If evacuation is advised, leave as quickly as possible and take emergency supplies.
- If you take your own car, take your pet. Emergency vehicles and general population shelters will not accept animals except service animals.

WHO CAN I CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION?

For more information in a Radiation Emergency, please check the following resources:

Connecticut Department of Public Health
www.dph.state.ct.us

For more information about health effects from radiation exposure check the following web sites:

www.epa.gov/radiation
www.orau.gov/reacts/define.htm

For more information about emergency response check the following web sites:

www.fema.gov
www.redcross.org/portal/site/en/rco_search?q=radiation
www.ready.gov/america/beinformed/radiation.html
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bja
www.orau.gov/reacts/injury.htm
www.fda.gov/drugs/emergencypreparedness/bioterrorismanddrugpreparedness/ucm072265

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A RADIATION EMERGENCY

GREENWICH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
101 FIELD POINT ROAD
GREENWICH, CT 06830
[203] 622-3783

HELPING THE COMMUNITY TO UNDERSTAND THE FACTS ABOUT A RADIATION EMERGENCY AND HOW TO PROTECT ITSELF...
**WHAT PRECAUTIONS CAN BE TAKEN FOR A RADIATION EMERGENCY?**

A radiation emergency occurs when radiation is released into the atmosphere causing external exposure or internal exposure.

- External exposure occurs from a radioactive source outside of our bodies - a nuclear detonation.
- Internal exposure occurs from materials taken into the body through breathing, eating or drinking.

**WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS?**

Radiation can affect the body in many ways and adverse health effects of exposure may not surface for many years.

Potential adverse health consequences include:

- Mild skin reddening
- Cancer and death, depending on the amount of radiation absorbed by the body, type of radiation, route of exposure and length of time exposed.

**SHOULD POTASSIUM IODIDE BE TAKEN DURING A RADIATION EMERGENCY?**

Potassium iodide, also known as KI, is a form of iodine and should only be taken when the Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcast instructs you to. If taken up to four (4) hours after exposure, KI will block most of the radioactive iodine.

Facts to know about KI:

- **KI protects your thyroid gland.**
- **KI should be taken only during a radiation emergency.**
- **Children and adults under age 40 years benefit the most from KI.**
- **For adults 40 years and older, KI is needed to control a condition called hypothyroidism, which is an under-active thyroid gland.**
- **Anyone who has allergies to shellfish should avoid KI.**
- **People with thyroid disorders and pregnant women should consult a physician before taking KI.**
- **Do not take KI if you are allergic to iodine or if you have chronic hives, lupus or other conditions with hypocomplementemic vasculitis.**
- **Check with your physician before taking KI if you have Graves’ disease or are taking certain heart medications.**

**WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDED DOSES FOR POTASSIUM IODIDE?**

Potassium Iodide or KI should be taken only when instructed to by the Emergency Alert System (EAS) broadcast. During an emergency, the Food and Drug Administration recommends:

- **Adults** should take one 130-mg tablet.
- **Children between 3 and 18 years of age** should take one-half of a 130-mg tablet (65 mg).
- **Children between 1 month and 3 years of age** should take one-fourth of a 130-mg tablet (32 mg).
- **Infants from birth to 1 month of age** should be given one-eighth of a 130-mg tablet (16 mg).

**Pills can be taken whole, broken or mixed with food or liquid.**

**One dose of KI provides 24 hours of thyroid protection.**

**Do not take extra pills, it will not provide added protection.**

**Do not take extra pills after leaving the affected area.**

You do not need a prescription to purchase KI, but caution is advised if purchasing KI over the internet and in retail outlets. A limited number of pharmacies in Greenwich carry KI.