

# Radiation Around You



Radiation is around us all the time. It is as much a part of our everyday environment as the light and heat of the sun's rays. Scientists call this background radiation and measure it in units called millirems.



Earth has always been radioactive. In fact, the natural radioactivity in the environment is just about the same today as it was at the beginning of the Neolithic Age, more than 10,000 years ago.



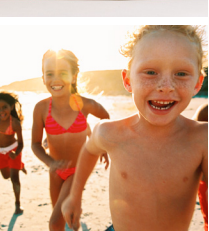
The water we drink, the food we eat, the air we breathe - all contain radioactive elements that occur naturally and always have been on Earth.



People living in Denver (high elevations) get more cosmic radiation from the sun than people in Dallas (low elevations).



Television depends on radiation to form the picture, yet modern sets give off a barely detectable level of radiation.



There are many different kinds of radiation that can be both beneficial and harmful under some circumstances. For example, while none of us would be alive without radiant energy from the sun, excessive exposure can cause skin cancer.



A person traveling on a transcontinental flight at an altitude above 33,000 feet receives about 3 to 5 millirems of radiation per trip. This is more than you would receive if you spent 24 hours a day at the gate house of a nuclear power plant for an entire year.



For most people, the biggest single source of man-made radiation exposure is medical tests.



Mother Nature's Reactor! In 1972, scientists found the remains of a natural nuclear reactor located in a uranium mine in Oklo, Gabon, Africa. Evidence shows that a nuclear chain reaction occurred in the mine 1.5 billion years ago.



A portion of each person's annual dose of radiation, about 40 mrem, comes from inside the human body. This results from the decay of naturally occurring radioactive atoms found in such elements as potassium contained in our bodies.



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# Radiation

is a part of our world



**Estimate Your Personal  
Annual Radiation Dose**

