

# No Health Threat in LA County: The Facts about Radiation from Japan

## 1. What is radiation and how do you get exposed to it?

Radiation is a form of energy that's around us at all times. We're exposed to small amounts of radiation every day, from naturally occurring sources (like elements in soil) and man-made sources (like medical x-rays). Radiation can also come from radiological accidents, like the one happening in Japan.

## 2. Does damage to the Japanese nuclear power plants pose a health risk to LA County?

No. California is 5,000 miles away from Japan, so we do not expect to see any significant radiation increase in California's food, water, or air. The damage to the Japanese nuclear power plants does not pose a health risk to Los Angeles County.

## 3. Should you take Potassium Iodide (KI)?

No. There are no signs that radioactive material, including radioactive iodine, will reach harmful levels in LA or neighboring counties. There is no need for or benefit to taking KI. Taking KI unnecessarily can cause harmful side effects or allergic reactions. Only public health officials and your doctor can safely determine whether you should take KI.

## 4. Will radiation from Japan affect LA County's beaches?

No. Any radioactive particles in the ocean water near the damaged nuclear plants in Japan will dilute to extremely low levels before arriving in California's ocean water and are NOT a health concern to surfers, swimmers or pets at LA County's beaches.

## 5. What can you do right now?

Follow the tips below to prepare yourself and your community for any future disasters:

- Visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eprp/media/index.htm>
- Create emergency plans that help you get in touch with loved ones during an emergency.
- Build emergency kits for your home, work, and car.
- Meet and build relationships with your neighbors.
- Build relationships with community organizations such as neighborhood organizations, schools, and volunteer agencies in your area.
- You can also build relationships with faith-based groups such as churches, synagogues, and temples in your neighborhood.



### Important Facts

1. There are no harmful radiation levels in LA County.
2. LA County's food, water, and air are safe.
3. You should NOT buy or take potassium iodide (KI) or other products to reduce risk from radiation exposure. It is not necessary and may be harmful.

### Where can you go for more information?

#### CA Dept. of Public Health:

(916) 341-3947

Available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,  
Spanish and English

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

(800) CDC-INFO

(800) 232-4636, available 24/7

#### Food and Drug

#### Administration:

<http://www.fda.gov>

# No Health Threat in LA County: The Facts about Food and Water Safety

## 1. How do we know that imported foods from Japan are safe?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration reports that imported food products currently available in the U.S. are safe to consume. The FDA has a strict screening process in place to inspect products that come into our ports and prevent unsafe products from entering our food supply. They also collect information about where Japanese food products are grown, harvested, and manufactured so that they can keep U.S. consumers safe.

## 2. What food products come to the U.S. from Japan?

Food products most commonly imported from Japan are seafood, snack foods, fresh produce and processed fruits and vegetables.

## 3. Are food crops and livestock grown in California at risk of radioactive contamination?

No. Agriculture is not currently at risk because there is no indication that harmful amounts of radioactive particles will reach LA County. In addition, produce is washed at various stages of production and processing. Individuals who grow their own food should always wash produce before eating.

## 4. Is it safe to eat meat, poultry, and dairy products from livestock produced in California?

Yes. Based on current information, there is no risk to the U.S. food supply. This includes, but is not limited to, all meat, poultry, and dairy products. The FDA is working closely with the Japanese government and other U.S. agencies to ensure that our food supply remains safe.

## 5. Is it safe to drink LA County water?

Yes. Water supplies in LA County are frequently monitored to ensure that water is safe to drink.

## 6. Will radiation from Japan affect LA County's beaches?

No. California is 5,000 miles away from Japan, there is not expected to be any significant increase of radioactive material in California's ocean water or seafood. Any radioactive particles in the ocean water near the damaged nuclear plants in Japan will dilute to extremely low levels before arriving in California's ocean water and are NOT a health concern to surfers, swimmers or pets at LA County's beaches.



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