



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NUCLEAR OR RADIATION EMERGENCIES

What are nuclear or radiation emergencies?

Nuclear emergencies happen when radioactive or nuclear material explodes. These explosions can cause blinding light, heat, fires, and dangerous radiation.

A radiation emergency could include a nuclear power plant accident. It could also be an explosion from a “dirty bomb.” A “dirty bomb” is an explosive, like dynamite, that contains radioactive materials.

What should I do *during* a nuclear or radiation emergency?

State and local authorities will monitor the amount of radiation and decide what to do. Listen to the radio, television, or an emergency-alert system for instructions. Have a battery-powered radio available, if needed. Officials will tell you whether to stay inside or leave your home. If you are told to stay in your home:

- Close and lock all doors and windows.
- Turn off all ventilation systems. This includes furnaces, air conditioners, vents, and fans.
- Stay in an inside room with no windows. Make sure there is enough space for everyone in the room.

Will a nuclear or radiation emergency make me sick?

Dirty bombs probably do not have enough radiation to make you sick. The main danger is the blast. But, a large nuclear explosion could make you sick. It can take several hours to days for any signs to appear. Some people have no symptoms. Others only have one or two symptoms. Some common symptoms include:

- Reddening of the skin
- Feeling very tired
- Feeling sick or throwing up
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Sore mouth or bleeding gums

If you feel sick, call your doctor right away.

What should I do *after* a nuclear or radiation emergency?

If you are not close to the area where the explosion happened, you should go inside and listen to the radio, television, or emergency-alert system for instructions. If you are near the explosion and not hurt, you should:

- Walk to the nearest building and go inside. Staying inside will reduce your exposure to radioactive material.
- Take off your clothes and shoes as soon as you can and put them in a plastic bag. Seal the bag.
- Take a shower or wash your skin the best you can with soap and water.
- Listen for information about what to do.

Ready in 3 is an emergency-preparedness program for Missouri. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services sponsors the program. **Ready in 3** aims to help residents and communities prepare for many types of emergencies from tornadoes to terrorism. For more information, visit health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3.

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