

## Frequently asked questions about Japan's radiation emergency

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) continues to monitor the current nuclear power plant emergencies in Japan. Ohio has a plan for response to radiological emergencies if one were to arise. According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Japan's nuclear emergency presents no danger to Ohio. ODH does not expect any health risk following the nuclear reactor releases in Japan, nor is the consumption of potassium iodide tablets a necessary precaution.

Should the need arise to implement the State of Ohio Emergency Operations Plan for radiation emergencies in Ohio, the public can expect similar actions being taken: evacuation; sheltering; and monitoring. Part of the Ohio plan includes the issuance of potassium iodide (KI) to emergency workers and members of the public who could not be removed from the evacuation zone. Evacuation from the source of radiation remains the primary protective action to protect the public health. Taking KI is a supplemental action that only protects the thyroid gland.

Additional information on potassium iodide use during emergencies in Ohio can be found on the ODH Web site at:

<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/rp/techs/kipolicy.aspx>

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Q. What's the risk for Ohio from the current nuclear power emergency in Japan?**

A. ODH sees no evidence of public health risk to citizens of Ohio at this time.

#### **Q. What is being done to test for radiation that might be coming or is present in the environment?**

A. Both Federal and State environmental monitoring is ongoing and will be supplemented as needed.

#### **Q. Does Ohio have a plan in place to respond to a radiological emergency?**

A. Yes. The State of Ohio Emergency Operations Plan is used for response to radiological emergencies. This plan includes the Ohio Plan for Response to Radiation Emergencies at Commercial Nuclear Power Plants.

#### **Q. Does Ohio stockpile Potassium Iodide for such an emergency?**

A. Yes. Ohio does stockpile emergency supplies of potassium iodide (KI) tablets prepositioned for populations around commercial nuclear power plants in Ohio. Potassium iodide tablets are not recommended at this time and should not be taken unless directed by state health authorities.

#### **Q. Why are potassium iodide tablets used during emergencies involving radiation exposure?**

A. Potassium iodide tablets may be recommended to individuals who are at risk for radiation exposure or have been exposed to excessive radiation. Potassium iodide blocks the thyroid gland's absorption of radioactive iodine.



**Q. Should I be taking potassium iodide to protect myself?**

A. No. Potassium iodide tablets are not recommended at this time.

**Q. Should I purchase potassium iodide as a precaution?**

A. No. Potassium iodide is only appropriate within a very close proximity to a nuclear event.

**Q. Are there any protective measures I should currently take?**

A. The best thing anyone can do is to stay informed. ODH and other state and federal partners are monitoring the situation. If circumstances change, officials will alert the public to appropriate precautionary actions.

**For additional information please contact the ODH information line at  
(614) 644-2727, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

