Uranium and Radiation on the Navajo Nation

YOUR HEALTH

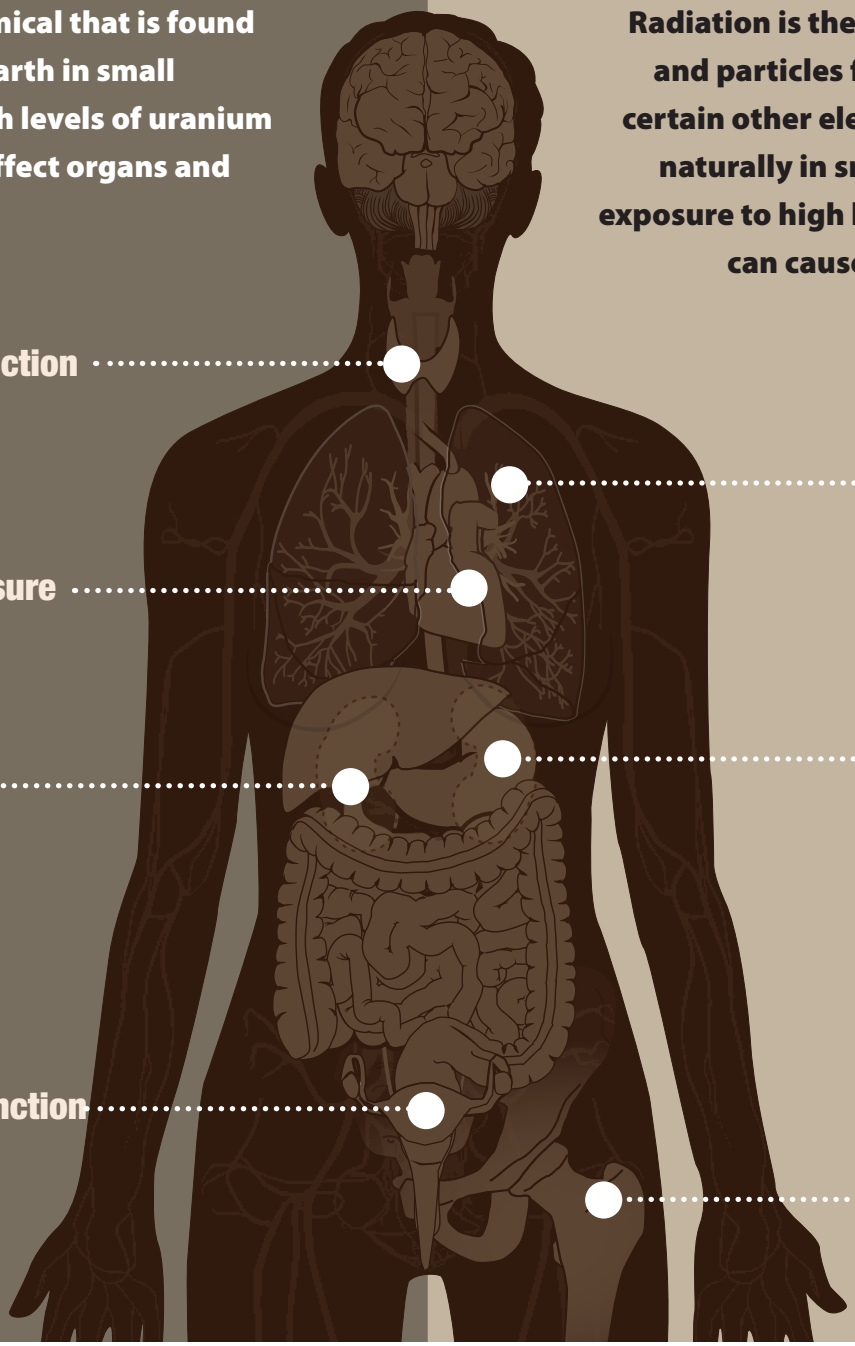
Uranium can have chemical and radiological effects on the body.

Chemical effects

Uranium is a chemical that is found naturally in the earth in small amounts. But high levels of uranium in the body can affect organs and body processes.

Radiation effects

Radiation is the release of energy and particles from uranium and certain other elements. It is found naturally in small amounts. But exposure to high levels of radiation can cause health problems such as cancer.



More information and suggestions for staying healthy on the back page.

Uranium and radiation can be harmful to your health.

Contact with uranium can cause health problems in people — some problems we know about and some we may not know.

Although more research is needed to fully understand how uranium affects our health, we know that contact with uranium can cause kidney damage. Contact with uranium may also increase risk for high blood pressure, autoimmune diseases (diseases that cause your immune system to attack healthy cells), and reproductive problems. Some kinds of kidney damage are reversible, once uranium exposure stops.

Contact with radiation from uranium and other natural elements can also affect your health. Possible health effects include lung cancer, bone cancer, and impaired function of the kidneys.

You can come in contact with uranium, radiation or both during activities like spending time at abandoned uranium mines, living in a home that was built with material from a mine or mill site, drinking unregulated water, or not following good water hauling practices.

Take steps to reduce your contact with uranium and radiation by reading the fact sheet *Uranium and Radiation on the Navajo Nation: REDUCE YOUR CONTACT*.

Talk with your doctor about uranium, radiation and your health.

If you've had contact with uranium or radiation, or you're worried that you might have, let your doctor know.

It's important to take care of yourself to stay healthy. Staying healthy helps your body deal with stressors including uranium or radiation. If you've had contact with uranium, it's especially important that you take steps to stay healthy:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Use drinking water from a regulated water source
- Get physical activity every day
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Manage diabetes and high blood pressure
- Take prescribed medicine correctly every day
- Don't smoke or use tobacco
- Get regular cancer screenings, like pap tests, mammograms, colonoscopies, and other cancer screenings

If you have questions about the uranium medical screening and monitoring program, call the **Navajo Area Indian Health Service at (505) 368-6311 or (505) 368-7391.**

December 2014 CS243198B