

## **Guidance to Health Care Providers:**

Military and other Government personnel returning from Japan may seek appointments at your offices or Military Treatment Facilities to ask for medical evaluations for their recent radiation exposures and to ask whether any exposure to radiation might pose health risks to themselves or others in their family. Radiation levels are being recorded at all of our military installations in Japan; these measurements are being used to estimate maximum possible exposures for the personnel residing on or near those installations.

At this time, there are no indications that any of our personnel in the vicinity of U.S. military installations in Japan have experienced radiation exposures that would pose a risk for acute or long-term health effects. Returning individuals may, however, have perceptions that they have experienced significant exposure to radiation or that they may be at increased risk of illness. These concerns and perceptions should be addressed, and factual information should be provided to permit patients to understand the nature of the events they have experienced and their impact on current and future health.

When beneficiaries, who recently returned from Japan, present in your clinics, you should:

- (1) Be attentive, compassionate, and understanding; actively listen to them—seek any clarifications necessary to ensure you fully understand what those concerns are. Listen to any presenting complaints that may require diagnosis or treatment so that you can clearly understand them and can respond to them appropriately—clinically and through appropriate risk communication.
- (2) Some patients may have completed and brought with them a NAVMED 6470, a Radiation Screening and Risk Assessment Form distributed by the Navy. If so, review and ask clarifying questions, complete the form, provide any additional medical follow-up as may be required, and place a copy in the patient's medical record.

In responding to patients' concerns about the possibility of radiation exposure, you may find the following information useful for risk communication.

- Acknowledge the concerns that led the patient to make an appointment and that the possibility of an exposure to radiation should not be taken lightly.
- Each of the Military Services has been diligently monitoring radiation at all of the U.S. Military installations in Japan—to include the air, water, and food.
- As of March 30, 2011, there have been no measured levels of radiation that would result in any radiation-related health problems that might show themselves now or years in the future.
- Although there may be a link between radiation exposure and an increased risk of cancer, especially at high levels of radiation exposure in one episode or with cumulative radiation exposures over years, radiation monitoring results at U.S. military bases in Japan, as of this date, have shown only very small amounts of

radiation related to the event, and negligible radiation exposure for individuals living and working outside of a 50-mile radius from the Fukushima power plant (only a small fraction of the radiation that might be experienced from a diagnostic x-ray or procedure).

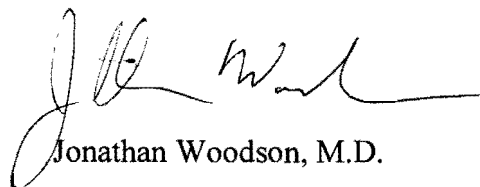
- U.S. experts are continuing to monitor the air, water, and food in Japan and will review data collected to ensure that accurate information about levels of radiation exposure continue to be available to inform questions about exposure levels and health risks.

Try to respond to all questions the patient may have. Anxiety may, of course, provoke physical symptoms or aggravate existing clinical conditions, and patients may experience illnesses unrelated to their recent experiences and travel. Provide any clinically indicated evaluations and treatment appropriate to presenting symptoms and medical conditions. There are no biological markers or diagnostic tests to detect exposure to these very low levels of radiation, so diagnostic tests related solely to concerns for radiation exposure are not indicated. Passengers have been screened for contamination both upon exit from Japan and entrance into the United States. Any necessary decontamination measures will have been addressed at these points of embarkation and debarkation.

Patients may have been issued potassium iodide (KI), but have not been advised to take it. If they did take KI, document the number of tablets taken and duration of dosing. Document any side effects of medication (most commonly constipation, nausea, vomiting, stomachache, diarrhea, metallic taste in the mouth, fever, headache, acne, or rarely, more serious conditions such as thyroid storm). There is no indication at this time for use of KI for someone who has returned to the United States from Japan.

Additional sources of information provided by U.S. Government agencies are contained in attachment 1, should be reviewed, and will be updated as circumstances change.

Thank you for your attention and diligence in dealing with this event and supporting our Servicemen and women, their families and others who have returned to the United States in the wake of this event.



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## Attachment 1

### **Available Information Resources**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Web site includes information on medical management, treatment guidelines, and recommendations that include, but are not limited to, decontamination, acute radiation exposure and acute radiation exposure syndrome, internal contamination, cutaneous radiation injury, countermeasures, and prenatal radiation exposure. The CDC Web site has several training modules for clinicians seeking further information regarding this topic. Additional information can be obtained by signing up to receive electronic mail updates from the CDC. For clinicians and the public who have further questions not addressed by the resources found online, CDC representatives are available 24 hours a day by calling the toll-free number (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). The CDC Web site is: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation>

The U.S. Department of State and its embassy in Japan is providing information for U.S. citizens concerning all aspects of travel and living in Japan. <http://www.state.gov>

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Web site also includes information on radiation safety, which addresses topics, such as food safety and medical products. The Web site addresses topics, such as what steps the FDA is taking to ensure the safety of food imported from Japan, about which patients might be concerned. In addition, the FDA Web site also addresses questions that clinicians may have pertaining to medical products that are FDA approved for the treatment of internal contamination with radioactive iodine, and the available supply of pharmacological countermeasures, such as potassium iodine. The Web site is: <http://www.fda.gov/newsevents/publichealthfocus/ucm247403.htm>

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is committed to protecting and preserving our country's environment. It is monitoring the situation in Japan and is keeping the American people informed. An up-to-date posting of radiation levels from EPA air monitors can be found anytime at: <http://epa.gov/japan2011>.

TRICARE is providing updated information about this event. Links to sources of additional assistance for TRICARE beneficiaries will be provided on a regular basis at <http://www.tricare.mil/tsunami/default.aspx>.