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SPORTS, NATURAL HEALTH & FITNESS NEWS THAT'S GOOD FOR YOU

FUKUSHIMA RADIATION in Food & the Environment: Are You at Risk? by Pina LoGiudice, ND, LAc & Peter Bongiorno, ND, LAc



As naturopathic physicians, patients regularly ask us: "What is my risk from the Fukushima disaster?" It's an important question. Three years on, we still don't really know the possible long-term health repercussions.

North Pacific blue fin tuna were shown in 2012 to carry radioactive cesium over from Japan, but a 2013 PNAS study concluded that: "doses from Fukushima radionuclides...are comparable to, or less than, the dose all humans routinely obtain from naturally occurring radionuclides in many food items, medical treatments, air travel, or other background sources."

FDA.gov states that there is "no evidence that radionuclides from the Fukushima incident are present in the U.S. food supply at levels that would pose a public health concern." Since the U.S. imports 45 million pounds of fish from Japan, it is likely that some radiation from Fukushima is getting to your table.

Regarding other foods, imported Japanese tea seems to be now closer to background levels as it was found to have very high contamination in 2011. In April of 2011, the EPA reported Fukushima radioactivity in the drinking water of 13 American cities, with low-level cesium-137 in Washington state and Vermont milk. In April of 2012, the San Francisco Bay Area's milk showed double the maximum allowed contamination. Since most of the seaweed imported into the United States comes from Canada and Mexico, it is likely not more hazardous than any of the other food grown or raised in the continental United States.

Overall, having any extra radiation in our lives probably isn't as safe as any of us would like, but the Fukushima event may not create any more hazard than what we have already been dealt from military, industrial and natural radiation, which we already believe are co-factors in cancer and other common health challenges.

What You Can Do To Protect Yourself

EPA.gov says there is 'nothing you can do' if radioactive cesium is in the environment, 'but the risk is small anyway.' While much more research is clearly needed, we think these are reasonable and common sense recommendations:

1. **Fix the Underlying Cause:** prioritize replacing nuclear power with safer, renewable energy (like wind and solar). And let local and federal politicians and people of influence know that we will no longer tolerate this threat when safer options are available.

2. **Bring Anxiety Down:** the greatest threats to physical and emotional health following the Chernobyl and Three Mile Island accidents were 'anxiety and stress, and not radiation exposure' according to The Washington Post. Work with a therapist to learn ways to healthily process your worries.

3. **Eat Your Fruits and Vegetables for potassium and iodine:** Potassium will help block cesium absorption, while non-radioactive iodine will block its radioactive brother. High amounts of potassium are found in sweet potatoes, apricots, bananas and kiwi. Iodine sources include seaweed, eggs, yogurt, and strawberries.

4. **Avoid toxins, heavy metals, pesticides, pollution and contaminated water:** these may limit your body's ability to deal with radiation. Eat organic as much as possible, take off your shoes before entering your home, avoid metal amalgams and aluminum, and use water and air filtration.

5. **Exercise, Drink Plenty of Water, and Get 8 Hours of Sleep:** to help keep your DNA repair mechanisms optimal. In the event of radiation exposure, better repair means less chance of genetic damage.

6. **Consider Supplementing Your Body with Iodine, Antioxidants and Vitamin D.** Low dose, regular iodine supplementation may be preventive, but check with your doctor, for it may worsen some thyroid conditions. Low dose vitamin A, C, E, zinc and selenium may be helpful, although it is not clear there's greater benefit than eating adequate fruits and vegetables. Adequate vitamin D may protect the body from common background exposures.

7. **Supplements to Have On Hand for Emergency Exposure:** Potassium supplementation - may be useful if exposed to cesium 137. Potassium supplementation should be monitored by a doctor, especially if you have kidney issues or are on blood pressure medications; Spirulina - this greens food benefited Chernobyl accident children by helping escort radiation out of the body; Potassium iodide - is an over-the-counter supplement used to protect the thyroid from uptake of iodine-131 in the case of a leak. Check with a doctor before taking; Vitamin C - Fukushima workers showed no change in DNA damage markers or risk assessment for cancer when given this (i.v. and orally) during exposure, whereas workers who did not take it did show changes; Alpha lipoic acid and Vitamin E - oral intake of these antioxidants helped lower the urinary radioactivity of Chernobyl irradiated children; Prussian blue - this prescription ferrocyanide capsule antidotes radioactive cesium. You can ask your doctor if this would be accessible to you in an emergency.

Dr. LoGiudice has been called a 'world expert' by Dr. Mehmet Oz, appearing on his show 15 times. Dr. Bongiorno is a nationally known lecturer and author. Their clinic is New York-based and they partner with Zaycon Foods to help bring the healthiest food possible to the table. Doctors LoGiudice and Bongiorno are located at: 11 Stewart Ave. Huntington, NY 11743. For more info, www.InnerSourceHealth.com.