

Dear Friends and Residents of this interdependent global home,

I cannot give magical answers to everyone's needs at this time of crisis with the Japanese nuclear disaster. However, I can give you a few tips on how to listen to the official "expert" statements given on CNN or NHK or other networks, plus some tips on what to eat or not eat.

## LISTENNING

First, there is a great difference between medical use of radiation, with direct risk and benefit to a patient and the random distribution of a comparable dose to a large population. In the latter case the risk is magnified by the size of the population and the benefit goes to filling some general society benefit. Hence the individual harm may be sacrificed for the military or economic good of a country. How or why we must make this trade off has never been well understood by the public or well explained and agreed to by reasonable civil society.

There is also a significant difference between internal contamination with radioactive debris from a nuclear disaster and direct irradiation from an external medical device under the control of a professional who can ask for your consent, limit the exposure and take care of any problems which might unwittingly immediately occur. Medical radiologists keep no record of the long term results. When internal radioactive tracers are used in medicine they have short half lives (both biologically and physically) and are not similar to plutonium, uranium or thorium or other debris found in nuclear disasters.

Nevertheless, both exposures can be significant, and require some consent by those at risk. Unfortunately, this prior consent is absent in a disaster!

## EATING AND DRINKING

Persons with good general health and good basic nutritional health will fare better when the food, air or water is contaminated since the body normally chooses uncontaminated food when it is available to it. Avoid eating salads if you are suspicious of it being contaminated by fallout or contaminated water, and always wash carefully fruits and vegetables to remove any surface contamination. Do not take Potassium Iodide without medical supervision. The iodine 131 has a short half life, and probably will not travel very far from the source unless the release from the reactor is explosive, sending the debris high into the atmosphere.

If there is radioactive iodine in milk then there probably also is cobalt 60, a very dangerous gamma radiation emitter. The inorganic cobalt is incorporated into organic vitamin B 12 in the udder of the cow and becomes much more dangerous especially to the liver when ingested in milk. Avoid fresh milk for the children, unfortunately! Be careful to get sufficient rest so that the body can

undertake efficient repair of any damage. Keep hydrated with the best water available to you!

Although it is true that alpha radiation, the primary radiation in early fallout, can be stopped by paper, when this same radioactivity is released inside the body it does at least 20 times the cellular damage as the equivalent dose of X-ray. This would be contact dose, the highest dose a radioactive atom can give.

If you have distilled water available, or are able to prepare your own, use it for cooking vegetables that are from contaminated areas. This is clearly true in Japan, but also in the US since our bread basket is in California! It will leach out heavy metal debris. Throw out the waste water! You could also soak fruit in distilled water for the same reason. This is safe even for a pregnant woman and her fetus. If you live in or near to the contamination, use distilled water also for drinking. You can do this safely for up to two years. This was the only thing mentioned as helpful by the atomic veterans, that were deliberately exposed to nuclear radiation after WW II to see if they could function in a nuclear war.

I like to hold the food in my hands and thank it for its goodness. Then I ask that it protect me from any harmful contaminants it holds. I think this a sort of modern Prayer before Meals, and not irrelevant under the circumstances.

I wish you well, and especially hold in prayer the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and all the other radiation victims/survivors of our world, for they are terrified by this massive threat which they hoped no one would ever have to suffer again!

Peace!  
Rosalie Bertell