

Radiation: Fact and fiction

What is radiation?

Radiation is energy that travels in straight lines through space and matter. Every day we come into contact with radiation. It is a natural, ever-present phenomenon and its biggest source is the sun.

Contamination and exposure

When radioactive material comes to rest on a surface, like a building or human skin, that something is said to be "contaminated." If a particle is ingested, we speak about internal contamination. When a patient has an MRS scan or an x-ray in hospital he/she is exposed

to a source of radiation. However, this exposure is short-lived and the source is immediately removed, so the patient is not contaminated.

How is radiation measured?

The unit of measurement used for assessing the dose levels of radiation is the Sievert. The dose to which people are exposed is measured in millisieverts (mSv/hour or mSv/year).

