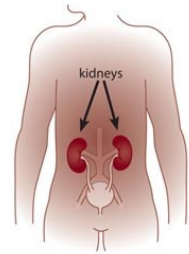


URANIUM AND HUMAN HEALTH

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

N

Uranium ingested in drinking water and food is stored primarily in the bones, liver, and kidneys. Some studies have shown small changes in the way kidneys work when people drink water with large amounts of uranium. These changes seem to go away when people stop drinking this water. What this means medically is unclear.



Another potential health concern is the presence of high levels of indoor radon in areas where naturally high levels of uranium occur. Radon is a radioactive, colorless, tasteless and odorless gas that occurs naturally in our environment. It is a short-lived radioactive decay product of radium which in turn is a radioactive decay product of uranium. You can find more information on indoor radon at <https://www.env.nm.gov/rcb/indoor-radon-outreach-program/> and at <https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/environment/air/Radon.html>.

U

There are medical tests that can determine whether you have been exposed to excessive amounts of uranium. Urine testing for uranium is the recommended standard test. Because most uranium leaves the body in urine within a few days of exposure, a urine test will show whether there was exposure to a larger-than-normal amount within the last week or so. Elevated urine-uranium levels will indicate uranium exposure but do not necessarily indicate health problems.

D

R

M

E

N

D

R

M

It is recommended that you see your medical provider and discuss your concerns. Your medical provider will advise you of the best course of action.

Uranium in urine at a level greater than 0.2 mcg/L is a notifiable condition in New Mexico and as such should be reported to the New Mexico Department of Health Environmental Health Epidemiology Bureau. To report suspected health problems from uranium and for health-related questions, call the New Mexico Department of Health Environmental Health Epidemiology Bureau at 1-888-878-8992 (toll-free). For more information, visit <https://nmtracking.doh.nm.gov>.

