

SELF-DECONTAMINATION AFTER AN IND IS DETONATED

Radioactive material can be spread in the same way that dust or mud can be tracked into the home or by touching another person or object. However, radiation is not "contagious" like some infectious diseases.

If you were outside at the time of the explosion and exposed to fallout, there are simple steps you can take to remove radioactive material that may have settled on your body.

People should remove contamination as soon as possible to reduce the risk of burns, inhalation and other harm.

Decontamination centers may be set up to help with decontamination and to prevent the spread of contamination. Follow the directions of the emergency responders to ensure effective decontamination.

If you are going to a monitoring location, it is best to change clothes and shower before being monitored. (CRCPD, 2006).

If you think you have been contaminated, the best thing to do is take a shower as soon as possible.

Remove your clothing to keep radioactive material from spreading.

You should act as if you are going home covered in mud: you do not want to track mud in your home.

Removal of clothes should be done in a garage or outside storage area if available. If an outside area is not available, the removal of clothing should take place in a room where the floor can be easily cleaned, such as the tub or shower areas (CRCPD, 2006).

When removing the clothing be careful of any clothing that has to be pulled over the head. Try to either cut the article off or prevent the outer layer from coming in contact with the nose and mouth area (CRCPD, 2006).

Be careful not to inhale contamination or get it into your mouth or eyes. Find something to cover your mouth and nose, such as a scarf, handkerchief, or other cloth. Keep cuts and abrasions covered when handling contaminated items to avoid getting radioactive material in them. (NJDHSSa, 2011).

If practical, place your clothing in a plastic bag and seal or tie the bag. Place the bag as far away as possible from humans and animals so that the radiation it gives off does not affect others.

Removing the outer layer of clothing can remove up to 90% of radioactive material.

When possible, take a lukewarm shower with lots of soap and water to help remove radioactive contamination. Do not scrub or scratch the skin.

Wash your hair with shampoo or soap and water. Do not use conditioner in your hair because it will bind radioactive material to your hair, keeping it from rinsing out easily.

Gently blow your nose and wipe your eyelids and eyelashes with a clean wet cloth.
Gently wipe your ears.

If you cannot shower, use a wipe or clean wet cloth to wipe your skin that was not covered by clothing. Otherwise, clean off with a dry paper towel or cloth. "Dry decon" may also be done for areas that are hard to decontaminate by carefully pressing then stripping off tape. Dispose of the towels etc. with the clothing.

Put on clean clothing.