

How can I be exposed to radiation?

You are exposed to radiation by being alive. The average background in the United States is an exposure, or dose, of 300 millirem/year. There are things that you can do that will increase this background dose. A dental bitewing x-ray will add about a week of dose. A chest x-ray will add another 10 days of dose. A trans-Atlantic flight will add about 5 days of dose, mostly from exposure to cosmic rays at that higher altitude in the atmosphere.

You are also exposed by eating some foods. Anything with a high potassium content will have some potassium 40. These include “no-salt” substitute, oranges, bananas, and brazil nuts to name a few. The FDA has guidelines on how much radioactivity can be in food sold for consumption in the United States. After the Fukushima Daiichi release in March of 2011 there was increased testing of food from Asia and Japan in particular. This testing ensured the radiological safety of the food supply in America