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Causes

By Mayo Clinic staff

Radiation is the energy released from atoms as either a wave or a tiny particle of matter. Radiation sickness is caused by exposure to a high dose of radiation, such as a high dose of radiation received during an industrial accident. Common exposures to low-dose radiation, such as X-ray examinations, do not cause radiation sickness.

Sources of high-dose radiation

Possible sources of high-dose radiation include the following:

- An accident at a nuclear industrial facility
- An attack on a nuclear industrial facility
- Detonation of a small radioactive device
- Detonation of a conventional explosive device that disperses radioactive material (dirty bomb)
- Detonation of a standard nuclear weapon

Radiation sickness occurs when high-energy radiation damages or destroys certain cells in your body. Regions of the body most vulnerable to high-energy radiation are cells in the lining of your intestinal tract, including your stomach, and the blood cell-producing cells of bone marrow.

Symptoms

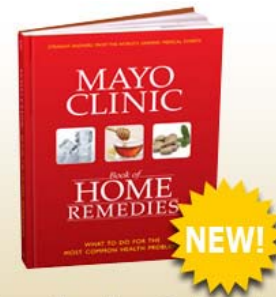
Tests and diagnosis

References

May 8, 2010

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