



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Health Department Expands Radiological Surveillance in Vermont

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health is using its environmental radiological monitoring stations around Vermont Yankee – plus a new air sampling station in Burlington – to track any increase in radiation from nuclear power plants damaged by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan on March 11.

Harmful amounts of radiation are not expected to reach as far as the U.S., and no radiation related to the disaster in Japan has been detected in Vermont.

The new monitoring station in Burlington was installed on March 17, and air samples from nine Health Department monitoring stations near Vermont Yankee are now being sampled weekly, an increase from once a month.

“Our hearts go out to the people of Japan who have suffered this horrendous tragedy,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “We are following the situation closely together with state and federal authorities. Here in Vermont, there is no need for anyone to take special actions, and no one should take potassium iodide (KI). Taking KI will not help anyone, and could be life-threatening for some.”

There is a chance that very small amounts of radioactivity, too low to be detected, may travel through air and slowly accumulate over time in Vermont soil, sediment and fungi. This is what happened following the very significant release at Chernobyl in 1986 and above-ground nuclear weapons testing in Nevada for decades after World War II.

The Health Department has been tracking radiation levels in the environment since 1970, before Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Station was built. Highly sensitive instruments have been used to measure all forms of radioactivity in thousands of samples of the air, milk, water, soil, vegetation and river sediment around Vermont Yankee and elsewhere in the state.

For more information, go to [HealthVermont.gov](http://HealthVermont.gov).

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