Radiation Exposures from Commonly Encountered Items

- 1300 mrem/y for the average cigarette smoker (mostly Pb-210 & Po-210)
- 650 mrem from a nuclear medicine examination of the brain (Tc-99m)
- 509 mrem from a nuclear medicine examination of the thyroid (Tc-99m or I-123)
- 405 mrem from a lower GI exam (X-ray)
- 245 mrem from an upper GI series (X-ray)
- 200 mrem/y from radon gas and it's decay products (mostly Po-218 & Po-214)
- 150 mrem from a nuclear medicine examination of the lung (Tc-99m or Xe-133)
- 110 mrem from a computerized tomography examination of the head and body (X-ray)
- 28 mrem/y from terrestrial radiation (from the ground)
- 27 mrem/y from cosmic radiation (from space)
- 25 mrem/y from substances within our body (primarily K-40 & C-14)
- 7.5 mrem/y from a spouse with certain types of cardiac pacemaker
- 6 mrem from a dental X-ray
- 5 mrem/y from foods grown on lands in which phosphate fertilizers are used
- 4 mrem for round trip coast to coast airplane trip (increased cosmic radiation)
- 4 mrem/y from highway and road construction materials
- 2 mrem/y from the use of gas lantern mantles (thorium)
- 1.5 mrem from each cross-country airline trip (one way)
- 1 to 6 mrem/y from domestic water supplies
- 1 mrem/y from television receivers
- 1 mrem/y from cosmogenic radionuclides (formed in atmosphere by cosmic radiation)
- 0.5 mrem from eating one-half pound of Brazil nuts
- 0.3 mrem/y from combustible fuels, (i.e., coal, natural gas, and liquefied petroleum)
- 0.2 mrem from drinking a quart of Gatorade each week (K-40)
- 0.1 mrem/y from sleeping with a significant other (K-40 and C-14 in their body)

Annual Dose from Background Radiation

Total US Ave Dose Equivalent = 360 mrem/year