

Comparison of Radiation Sources

| Source | Average Per Year |
|---|---------------------|
| Inside the Body (air—radon) | 200 millirem (mrem) |
| Inside the Body (food and water) | 40 millirem |
| Earth's Crust (Colorado plateau) | 90 millirem |
| Earth's Crust (Atlantic or Gulf Coast) | 23 millirem |
| Earth's Crust (elsewhere in the U.S.) | 46 millirem |
| Outer Space [Cosmic Rays] (5,000-6,000 feet) | 55 millirem |
| Outer Space [Cosmic Rays] (sea level) | 26 millirem |
| Medical X-Ray | 40 millirem |
| Living in Stone, Brick, or Concrete Building | 7 millirem |
| Airline Flights (round-trip cross-country) | 5 millirem |
| Airline Flights (per 1,000 miles flown) | 1 millirem |
| Watching Television | 1–2 millirem |
| Computer Terminal | 0.1 millirem |
| Luminous Wrist Watch | 0.06 millirem |
| Coal-Fired Power Plant (living within 50 miles) | 0.03 millirem |
| Nuclear Power Plant (living within 50 miles) | 0.009 millirem |
| Smoke Detector | 0.008 millirem |

The average American receives radiation exposure of about 360 millirems annually from all sources, according to the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP). More than 80 percent of that comes from nature—from radon in the air, from rocks and soil, and from outer space. The next largest source of radiation exposure for the public is medical treatment, which accounts for about 11 percent—or 54 millirems—annually to the average person. The average public exposure from the nuclear fuel cycle is 0.5 millirem per year.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission's annual limit for occupational exposure to radiation is 5,000 millirems (mrem). The average U.S. nuclear power plant worker receives 160 millirems. A typical X-ray, by comparison, provides 10 millirems.

Source: [NCRP](#) and the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#)