

Uranium Fact Sheet

Natural uranium is a weakly radioactive metal that is found in many types of rock, and low levels of it can end up in some drinking water sources and foods. Enriched uranium is derived from natural uranium, but is much more radioactive. Enriched uranium is used as fuel in nuclear power plants and in nuclear weapons. Depleted uranium, a byproduct of uranium processing, is used in military and medical applications. Depleted uranium can have toxic effects similar to natural uranium, but is less radioactive.

Uranium is found in

- Drinking water sources in some places, such as parts of the Central Valley and some areas in Southern California.
- Some foods, such as root vegetables and leafy greens, grown in areas that have uranium in the soil or water.
- Radiation-shielding equipment made with depleted uranium, used in medical and other applications.
- Specialized ammunition and other military equipment made with depleted uranium.

Possible health concerns

Uranium:

- Can cause kidney damage.
- Can increase cancer risk.

Possible ways to reduce exposure

- If your water comes from a private well, have it tested for metals, including uranium. (If your water comes from a public water supplier, it is already tested regularly for uranium.)
 - If you work with uranium, follow all occupational safety guidelines for your industry.
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