

## HAZARDS AND THREATS

### Nuclear Emergency - Potassium Iodide (KI)

Potassium Iodide (KI) is a stable form of iodine. During a nuclear emergency, persons may be exposed to a radioactive form of iodine, which can be harmful to the thyroid gland.

In such an event, public health officials may recommend use of Potassium Iodide (KI) to offer some protection.

Potassium Iodide (KI) is not recommended for use as a precautionary medication unless there is specific emergency that warrants use as recommended by public health officials.

Although usually benign, it can be harmful to people with allergies to iodine or shellfish, those with certain skin disorders or those with thyroid problems.

Observed but infrequent side effects of ingesting Potassium Iodide (KI) include the following:

- Nausea
- Intestinal Upset
- Rashes
- Inflammation of the Salivary Glands
- Possible allergic reactions

**NOTE:** Potassium Iodide (KI) cannot protect the body from radioactive elements other than radioactive iodine – If radioactive iodine is not present, taking Potassium Iodide (KI) is not protective.

### **Web Resource Link**

Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <http://emergency.cdc.gov/radiation/ki.asp>

**Source:** Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

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