56. What is a curie (Ci) or a bequerel (Bq)?

These units measure the amount of radioactive material in a sample, such as in a sample of water, soil or air. This is sometimes referred to as the sample's radioactivity (or simply its activity). In the United States, we measure this amount of radioactive material in curies (Ci), and the international community uses becquerels (Bq). Typically, results will be in picocuries (pCi), which is one trillionth of a curie.

[PUT IN CONTEXT OF RADIATION INCIDENT RADIOACTIVITY FINDINGS]

57. Will people who have been exposed to the radiation get cancer?

There is clear evidence that high doses of radiation can raise your risk of cancer. Although cancer has been associated with high doses of radiation received over short periods of time, the cancers usually do not appear for many years, even decades.

According to radiation safety experts, radiation exposures of 5–10 rem (5,000–10,000 mrem or 50–100 mSv) usually result in no harmful health effects, because radiation below these levels is a minor contributor to our overall cancer risk.

Scientists and health experts are working now to gather information on the radiation risks posed by this incident. Meanwhile, health agencies will be establishing testing centers to check people for radioactive contamination and to arrange for any needed follow-up.

Further information will be provided soon by health and emergency management officials.

58. How much radiation is safe? How much is considered low risk?

According to radiation safety experts, radiation exposures of 5–10 rem (5,000–10,000 mrem or 50–100 mSv) usually result in no harmful health effects, because radiation below these levels is a minor contributor to our overall cancer risk.

Safety recommendations are designed to keep your dose as low as possible.

It takes a large dose of radiation—more than 75 rem (75,000 mrem or 750 mSv)—in a short amount of time (usually minutes to hours) to cause immediate health effects, such as acute radiation sickness.

[PUT INCIDENT DOSE IN CONTEXT TO RADIATION SICKNESS DOSES]

Infants, the elderly and pregnant women are more sensitive to radiation exposure than healthy adults. Factors like age, gender and even previous exposure also might influence a body's reaction to radiation exposure.