

UNDERSTANDING RADIATION

What is radiation?

- Radiation is energy given off by atoms
- You cannot see, smell or taste radiation
- Radiation is present all around us
- Everyone is exposed to radiation every day from natural sources and manmade sources like medical X-rays and smoke detectors

How is radiation measured?

You will see two measurements when we talk about radiation "dose." Rem is a unit that measures what effect radiation has on tissue. Dose is often shown as mrem, which is 1/1,000th of a rem: 1,000 mrem equals 1 rem.

Radiation from everyday activities

- Radioactivity that naturally occurs in your body - 29 mrem per year
- Flying in an airplane - 0.3 mrem per hour
- Getting a dental X-ray - 1 mrem per X-ray
- Getting a chest X-ray - 10 mrem per X-ray
- Exposure to space sources including sun - 33 mrem per year
- Smoking 1 pack of cigarettes per day - 30 mrem per year

