Each of us is exposed daily to radiation from naturally-occurring sources in our environment and in the foods we eat, as well as from cosmic radiation from space. Additional radiation can come from medical procedures to address conditions with serious health risks. Exposure to very high doses of ionizing radiation given at a fast rate (seconds to minutes) can damage living tissue beyond repair. This chart compares ranges of doses from the Chernobyl event (left) with doses from natural, occupational or medical sources.

- **< 0.1 rem:** Residents in other European countries (1 year later)
- **1-2 rem:** Soviets outside the exclusion zone (5M residents, extra lifetime dose)
- **3 rem:** Chernobyl evacuees (115,000 people, extra lifetime dose)
- **12 rem:** Average Chernobyl cleanup worker (600,000 people, extra lifetime dose)
- **100-1600 rem:** Chernobyl operators and first responders (evening of accident)
- **>70 rem:** Acute Radiation Syndrome (minutes)
- **0.004-.005 rem:** 1 Dental bite-wing X-ray
- **~0.005 rem:** 1 Round trip cross country flight
- **< 0.3 rem:** 1 Mammogram
- **0.4 rem:** Average background radiation (1 year in Idaho)
- **2-10 rem:** 1 Full-body CT scan
- **5 rem:** Occupational dose limit for nuclear workers (per year)
- **3,600-20,000 rem:** Prostate cancer radiotherapy (dose to tumor over 4-7 weeks)