

Question and Answer Booklet



January 4, 1974

TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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Question and Answer Booklet

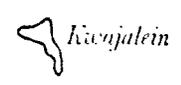
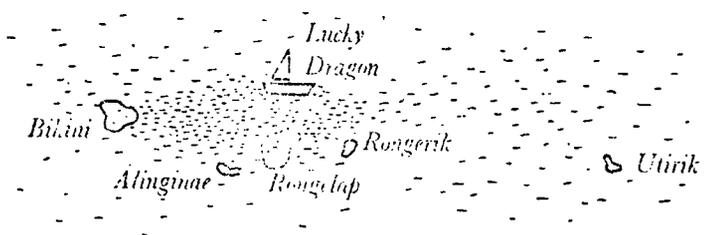
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TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS



Marshall Islands



January 4, 1974

Message from the Director:

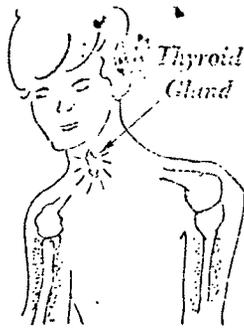
This educational booklet represents a significant effort to provide information to the people of Rongelap and Utirik about "radiation" and the circumstances of their exposure and illness.

Highlighting this project is the Department's attempt to provide facts to the people of the two atolls to satisfy the need for knowledge of this unusual health problem. The booklet is being prepared in both English and Marshallese language to assure clear understanding of the people who will read the booklet.

Much has been accomplished through the collection of data to be printed as public information in the booklet; but much more remains to be done.

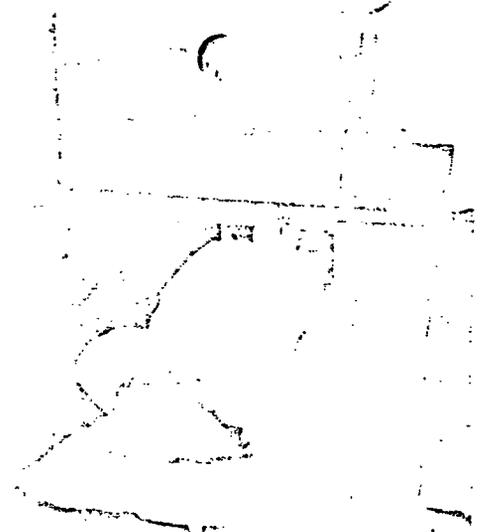
I would like to extend my appreciation to the staff and other participants for their dedication and effort to make this booklet possible. I also extend my greetings to the people of Rongelap and Utirik.

DR. MASAO KUMANGAI
Director of Health Services



How does radiation cause diseases in our bodies?

Radiation in fallout caused injury to parts of the body. Later on these parts became sick and cannot do their job properly. There is very little radiation left in the body now.



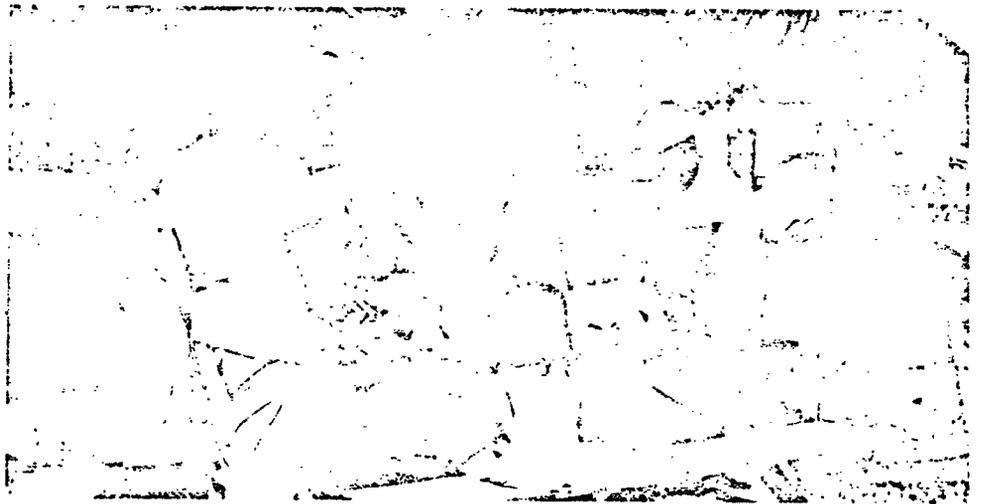
Body Scanner

How can we tell if we have radiation in our bodies?

It is difficult for you to know if you have radiation in your body because there is so little. Only the experts can tell by checking you every year with special machines.

How can we get rid of the radiation in our bodies, trees, ground, crabs, etc?

Your body will remove some of the radiation naturally when you use the benjo but this takes a long time. The only way to get rid of the radiation in the trees, soil, crabs, etc. is to collect them and dump them into the ocean. But, since the radiation is weak and can not harm anybody, there is no reason to do this.

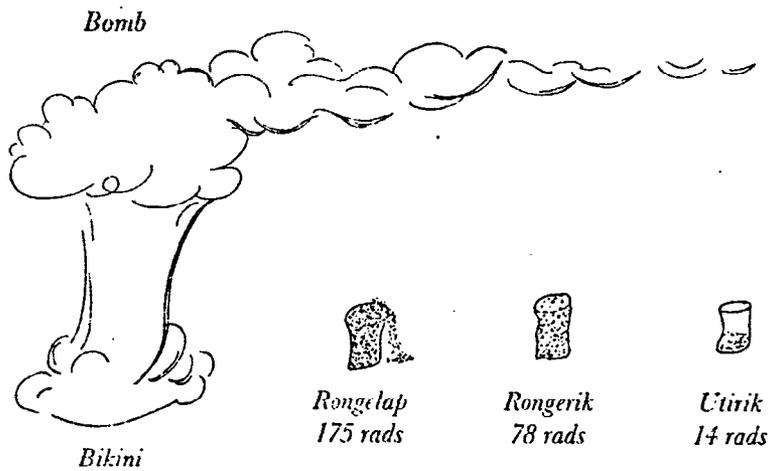
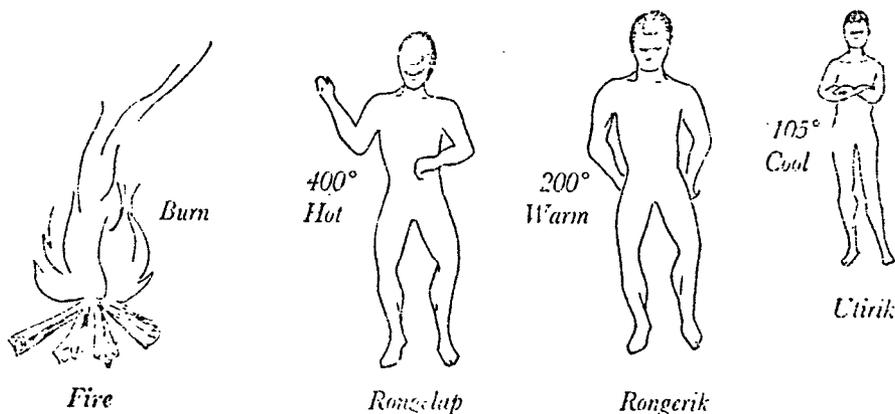


Lush Growth on Rongelap

Did we people on Utirik get as much radiation as the people on Rongelap?

No, because Utirik is farther away from Bikini than Rongelap. One way to measure radiation is by counting the "rads". Below is the number of rads the people got in 1954:

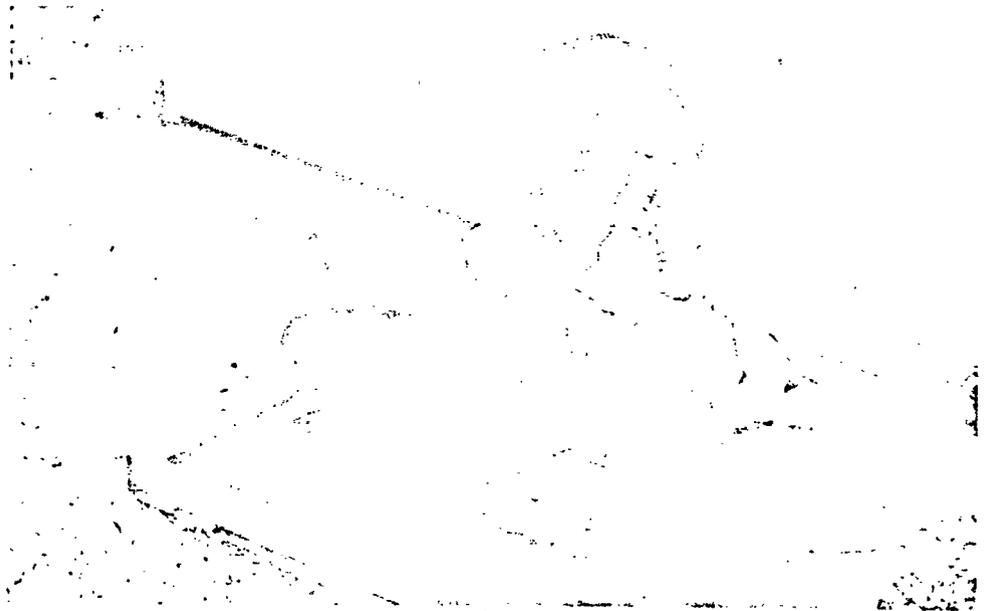
People on Rongelap.....	175 rads
People on Ailinginae.....	69 rads
Americans on Rongerik.....	78 rads
People on Utirik.....	14 rads



No, because Utirik is farther away from Bikini. It is like fire. The closer you get to fire the hotter it gets. Heat is measured by degrees. Radiation is measured by rads.

Is there still radiation in the ground? How long will it last?

Yes, but it is safe. We don't know how long the radiation will be in the ground but it gets weaker and weaker as time goes by.



Woman Washing Clothes

It is like dirty clothes. If you wash them and lay them in the sun the dirt and poison will come away. The ground is too big to wash like clothes so the sun and the rain does it for you.

If the radiation is still in the soil of these islands, why is there no restriction of people moving into these islands?

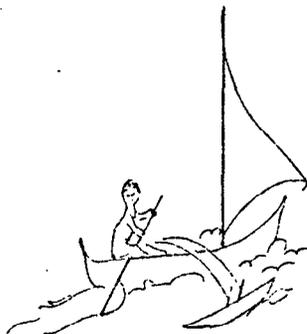
The radiation in the ground is weak and will not harm anybody. It is safe to live on the islands and eat the food.



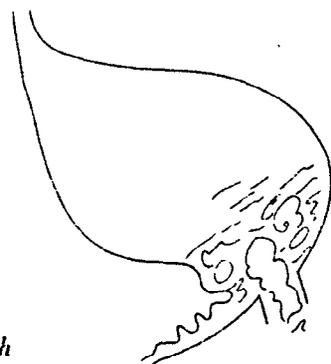
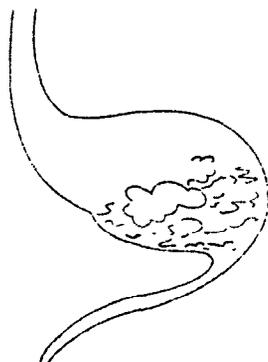
Feast on Rongelap

Why can't we eat coconut crab and arrowroot?

You can eat coconut crab from Rongelap and Arbar if you do not eat more than one crab per day. There is still radiation in crabs because they eat their own shells when they grow new ones. If you go to a party and eat three crabs, then you should not eat any for the next three days. Also, you should not eat crabs from the other islands in the Rongelap lagoon. The people on Utirik can eat all the crabs they want. You may also eat all the arrowroot you want.



Boat



Stomach

This is like putting too many people in a boat. One man in a boat is ok. Three men, the boat sinks. One crab is ok. Three crabs the stomach cracks.

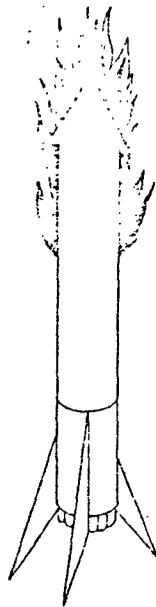
Is there anything else that we are not supposed to eat?

No, you may eat anything else that is good for you.

Person Eating Pandanus

You may eat anything else like . and .





If the U.S. can reach the moon, how come they did not know that the wind was going to be shifted over to the islands?

There were some mistakes made. The U.S. can reach the moon because the equipment used to get man to the moon is under his control. The direction of the wind is more difficult to predict because the wind is not controlled by man.

Spaceship Burning

*There has also been mistakes in the space program.
Three astronauts were burned to death.*

Are miscarriages caused by the fallout?

Some of the miscarriages in exposed Rongelap women during the first years after the fallout may have been due to radiation exposure. Since that time there were only a few miscarriages and this is normal. Women do not have to worry about miscarriages.



*Children and Women
They are healthy.*

If I have trouble with my thyroid, will I be healthy again?

If you are treated properly and you follow the doctor's advice, you should be healthy and strong like anybody else. You should be examined every year so the doctor can find out if you have thyroid disease. If the doctors operate on your thyroid, they will give you medicine. If you listen to the doctor and keep taking your medicine, you will stay strong and healthy.

Since these same people have been there for some time, have the AEC found any signs of radiation sickness and if they do, will they be compensated?

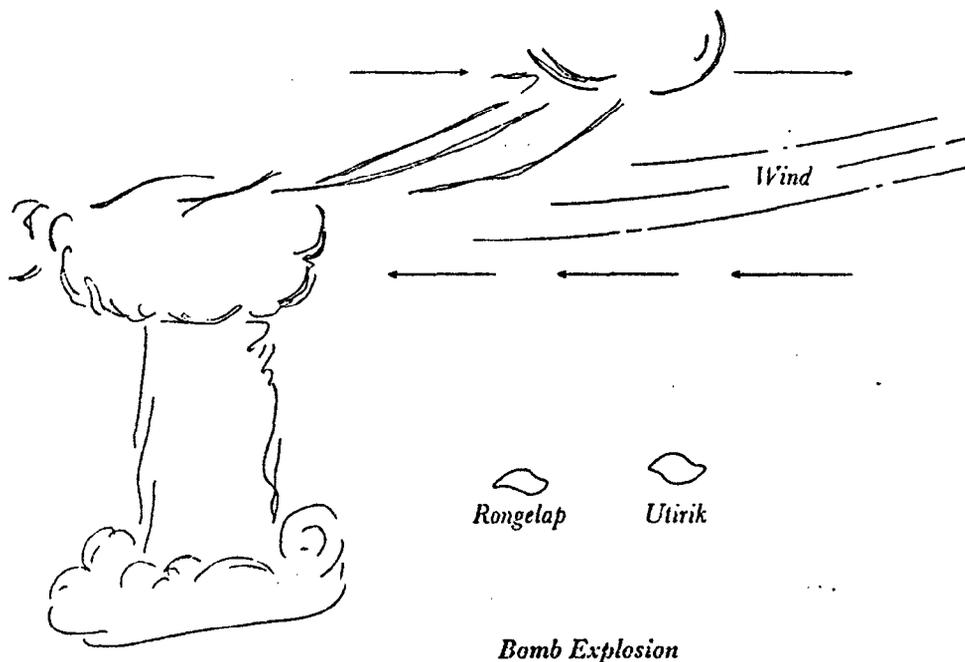
The people who were not exposed to the fallout in 1954 and are now living on Rongelap and Utirik may have gotten a little bit of radioactivity but only a very, very small amount. They have not been hurt by radiation so there is no need to compensate them.

Why doesn't the AEC remove the radiation from the soil and plants?

It is impossible to do so and since the radiation is so small, there is no reason to do this.

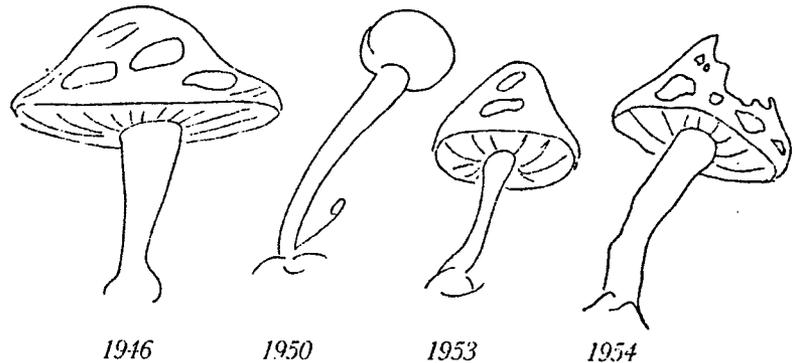
Why didn't the U.S. explain to the people the dangers of the fallout before the test?

The people were not warned of the dangers of the fallout because the likelihood that fallout would occur outside the restricted area was considered too remote to justify warning the people. The occurrence of fallout in an unrestricted area after the Bravo Test was the first accidental event of this kind to happen after a nuclear weapon test.



Why did the U.S. not take extra precaution?

The U.S. took the precaution of trying to keep people out of the area where they expected fallout to occur.



*Bomb tests since 1946 - 1954
1946 - 1953 all ok. 1954 bad.*

I was not exposed to radiation so why do I have to be examined?

The doctors examine people who were not exposed because they need to know when the exposed people become sick, if their sickness is caused by radiation or something else. If you were not exposed and got sick and your brother was exposed and got the same sickness, then the doctors know that the sickness was not caused by radiation. You do not have to be examined if you do not want to be. Remember, though, that you are helping your family and friends when you are examined. Also, you are receiving a free medical examination by the best doctors in the world.



*Doctor examines a patient
You are examined to make sure nothing is wrong.*

Why do I have to be examined every year?

Doctors still do not know everything about radiation sickness so they are checking you to make sure that you are healthy. They check you every year so that if you are sick, they can find it early and treat you. Doctor Conard's team treat many people every year, even when the sickness does not come from radiation. The Congress of Micronesia recommends that everyone take the examination.

Why are some people becoming sick now 20 years after the test?

The radiation was in their bones and certain parts of their bodies such as the thyroid gland. Doctors still don't understand how radiation causes disease. That is why they are checking you every year to make sure you are healthy.

Why do you have to take our blood? urine?

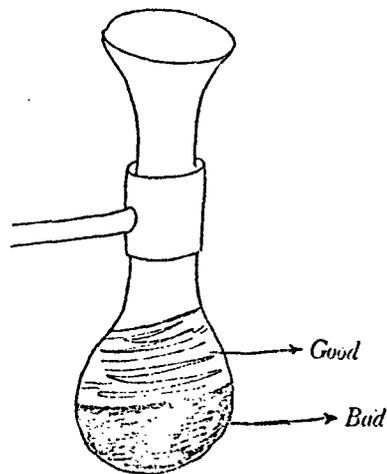
The doctors check your blood to find out if you have blood disease. They check your urine to find out if you have other diseases. For example, Dr. Conard found some people with diabetes (sugar sickness) which is not caused by radiation and he was able to give them medicine. Another reason is that the urine removes radiation from your body so the doctors want to find out if you still have radiation.

Why do they take our blood for examination and then throw some of it away?

The doctors take your blood to study it. They need to study your blood three or four times so they want to make sure that they have enough blood. It is better to take more blood than not enough because if they need more, they don't have to stick the needle into your arm again. You have plenty of blood so it won't hurt you to lose a little.

Blood Test

It is not your good blood that is thrown away. The doctors take out the good parts of your blood that they need for testing.

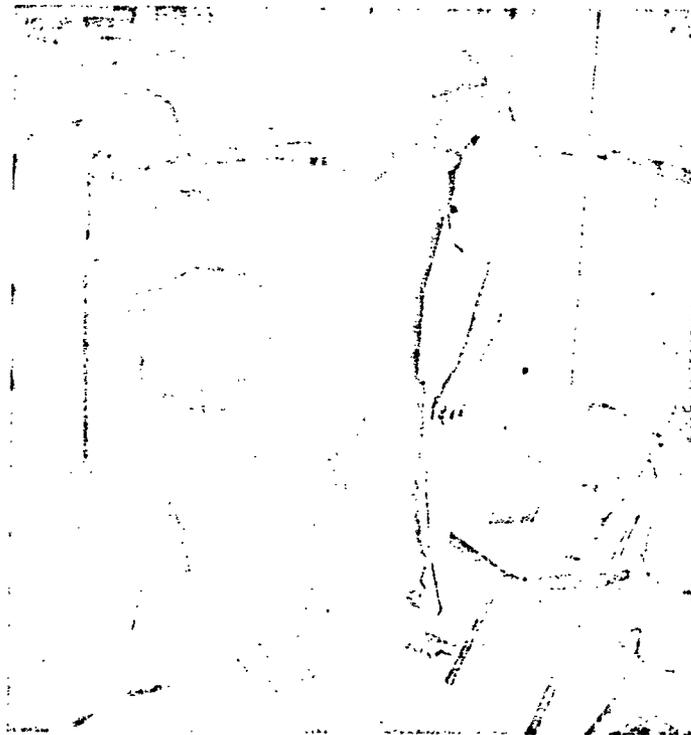


Why do you have to drill into our bones?

Radiation can cause blood disease and your blood is made inside of your bones. The doctors drill your bones to see if they are healthy.

Why do people die after they have their bones drilled?

Nobody can die from having their bones drilled. Drilling into your bones is not dangerous or harmful. The people probably died from something else.



Dentist drilling teeth

Dentists drill your teeth, too, but you do not die.

One man became blind after the fallout . . . Will I become blind too?

Radiation can cause some eye trouble but it will not make you blind. You don't need to worry about becoming blind if the doctors examine you every year.

Why do we have to be taken away to the States to be operated?

To give you the best medical care possible. The best doctors, hospitals and equipment are in the States so you are sent there for treatment. When Leko Anjain was sick, he was taken to the National Institute of Health Hospital in Maryland. Even the President of the United States goes to this hospital when he is sick because they have the best doctors and the best equipment in the U.S. It was sad that Leko died but the doctors did everything they could to treat him.

Why do I need to take medicine for my thyroid?

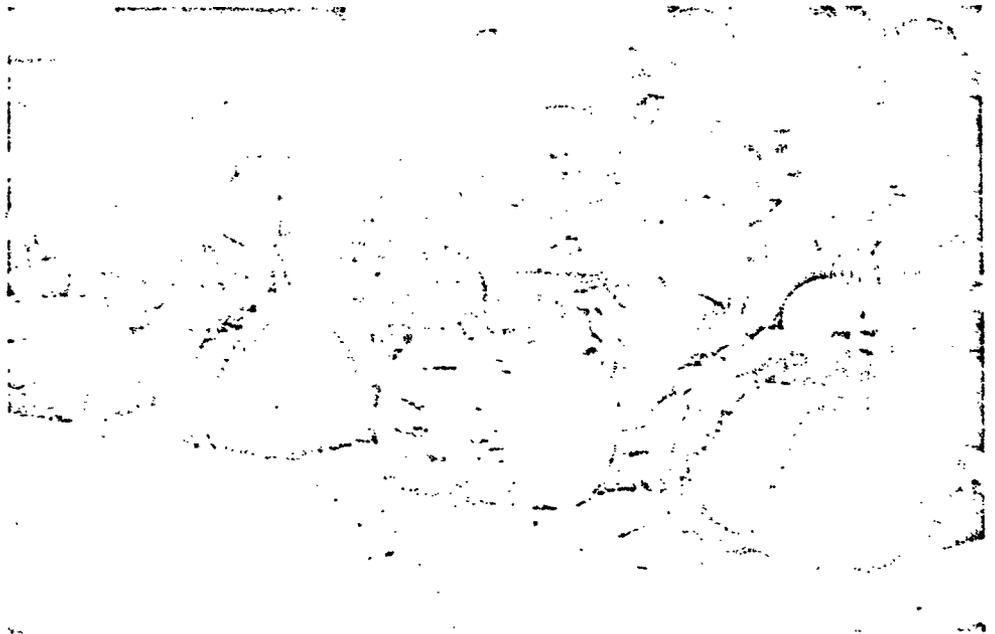
If you had an operation and your thyroid gland was removed, the medicine will do the job that your thyroid used to do. So, you must keep taking your medicine. Some people who did not have the operation take different medicine so that their thyroid glands do not get sick. It is very important that you take your medicine if you want to stay healthy.

What kind of radiation caused thyroid sickness and leukemia?

Thyroid sickness in Rongelap was caused by a certain type of radiation that attacked the thyroid gland. Scientists call it iodine 131 or radioactive iodine. All of the radiation is gone now but the thyroid in some people was damaged and it takes a long time for the sickness to show. Leukemia is a disease of the blood. Doctors do not know how it is caused but they know that blood is made inside your bones and that some of the radiation is in your bones. In leukemia the bones are sick so they cannot make blood properly.

What will happen to the people who were not exposed to radiation but are now living on Rongelap and Utirik?

They don't have to worry because we don't believe that they will get sick from the radiation.

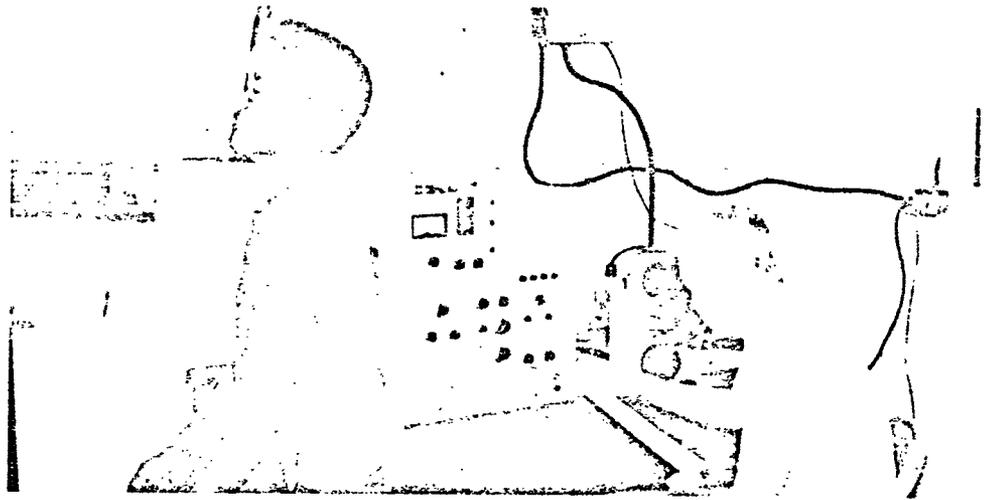


*Feast - People
They are Rongelap people. They are healthy, too.*



Why do the doctors feel our neck?

Your thyroid glands are in your neck. The doctors feel your neck to find out if you have a sickness in your thyroid gland. Another way to check your thyroid is with a special machine.



Thyroid Examination

Doctors feel your neck to find sickness and cure them.

What is the thyroid gland?

Your thyroid gland does a certain kind of work in your body. Your ears allow you to hear, your eyes make you see and your thyroid makes you grow normally and stay healthy. Because radiation affected their thyroid glands, some of the boys in Rongelap grew slowly after the fallout. In 1965, they were given special medicine



and they grow normally. If you have a thyroid operation, it is very important that you take the medicine that is given to you. The medicine will do the same work as your thyroid and it will keep you healthy.

Aike and Mike

They were sick before. They are healthy now.

What is cancer?

Cancer is a disease which happens when a certain part of your body becomes sick and does not do its job. The sickness can spread to other parts of your body. Cancer of the blood is called leukemia and that is the disease that Leko J Anjain had. Some kinds of cancer can be controlled by medicine and others must be stopped by operation. Some types of cancer, such as leukemia, cannot be cured. Cancer is dangerous but if the doctors examine you and find it early, they have a better chance to help you.

So far, what are the health findings? Are we healthier or sicker?

The health examinations show that you are a healthy and strong people. The only differences have been the higher number of miscarriages in 1957 and 1958 and the thyroid operations.

What is our future in regards to our health?

Dr. Conard and the other doctors feel that most of you are healthy and that you do not need to worry about the future. This is also true for the unexposed people who moved onto the island after the fallout and for the children who were born after 1954. Some of you may become sick but you will be given the best medical care possible . . . even if the sickness is not caused by the radiation. If you allow the doctors to examine you and if you follow their advice, you should be able to live a normal, healthy life.

