

Are there going to be any long term health effects?

It will totally depend on what you were contaminated with, if you were actually contaminated or simply exposed to the hazard, how long the exposure was and how you were affected by the hazardous material.

You should have been advised of any potential health risks before you left the site and if there are any symptoms you should be aware of and monitoring. If you have any concerns you should check with your doctor or health provider.

This was a pretty scary experience – I’m still feeling quite anxious – how long will that feeling last?

It is very normal to feel anxious after such an experience. Being involved in decontamination can be frightening for a lot of people. Some of the other reactions you might experience include:

- Feeling tired or depressed
- Difficulty sleeping or having nightmares
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling irritable or angry

If after a month or so you are still experiencing these kinds of reactions, or find yourself reaching out to alcohol or drugs to help you cope, you should get some short-term support.

I’m concerned about my children; how they are going to respond afterwards?

Young children will typically respond to an event such as this by following your lead as a parent. If you appear calm and take the situation in stride, your children will feel safe and secure. This will minimize any reactions they may be having.

Some children may indicate that they have an upset tummy, have difficulty going to sleep and be whinier or want to cling more to their parents. Some children may regress in their behaviour, for example, they may revert to thumb-sucking. Other children may talk about the event non-stop or act out through play the entire decontamination

This type of behaviour is common and is not cause for undue concern unless it carries on for an extended period of time and affects your child’s ability to cope on a day-to-day basis. Talking

calmly to your child in age-appropriate language about what happened, and why it happened will be helpful. Keeping to normal routines will also be important.

What should I tell my family and friends?

Most people, fortunately, have not experienced going through self-care decontamination. You should be prepared for a lot of questions from people regarding your experience. Certainly if you are comfortable talking about the experience, you should do so. However, you may wish to keep various aspects of the experience private.

Using such phrases as, “It was a difficult experience, and I’m sure you can understand why I would not want to discuss it right now,” can be polite but also clearly let others know you don’t want to talk about it.

When will I find out if I can have my items back?

The items you have left behind have been identified by a unique number assigned to only you. It may take some time before you will find out whether or not you can get your things back. The best

thing to do is to check back within a week with the local fire department and police department. They can advise you on the current situation.

Where can I get some support?

There are a number of places where you can get some support after undergoing decontamination.

For financial support

- Check with your local Community Emergency Manager and see if any financial compensation is available to you.
- You may have coverage through your insurance company for any losses. Call your insurance agent and see if you are eligible for financial compensation.
- Depending on the circumstances, your employer or local Workplace Agency may be able to provide you with financial support.

For emotional support

If you find yourself or your family needing some emotional support, don't hesitate to reach out for help. Often it just takes one or two counseling sessions to make a big difference.

- Persons who are trained to work with individuals who have experienced a trauma include psychologists, therapists or counsellors. If your workplace has an Employee Assistance Program, this would also be a good program to access.
- Your family doctor is also someone you can turn to and can provide you with a referral to someone who can help.

Referral Contact Information:

What Can I Expect After Undergoing Decontamination?

The following questions are often asked by contaminated persons and their friends and families following decontamination. These questions are general in nature; your local authorities should be contacted to answer specific questions.



It is common to experience emotional reactions after decontamination