

Mobile Phone Use

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Fact Sheet #40

Division of Environmental Health
Office of Radiation Protection



Mobile phones emit low levels of radio frequency (RF) energy. It is well known that high levels of RF energy can produce biological damage through heating effects. RF exposures less than that required to produce tissue heating have not been associated with adverse health effects but the technology is relatively new and more definitive conclusions are a few years away.

The U.S. government sponsors and supports some research efforts on mobile phone health issues and broader research efforts are under way internationally. Based upon the current data, the DOH offers the following suggestions.

- Using mobile phones: Present scientific information does not indicate the need for any special precautions for use of mobile phones. However, if an individual is concerned about potential risks, they are encouraged to take a few simple steps to minimize their exposure. Namely, they can choose to limit the number and length of calls and/or use “hands-free” devices to keep mobile phone antennas away from the head and body.
- EMF interference: Radio signals emitted by mobile phones may interfere with certain electronic equipment. In hospitals, airplanes, and other restricted areas, observe the warning signs and switch off your mobile phone when required.
- Driving safety: Anything that distracts a driver increases the risk of an accident. The distraction from mobile phones exists even if a hands-free kit is used. Motorists are strongly discouraged from using mobile phones while driving.

- SAR values: The United States Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has set limits on energy emitted by handset antennas. That number, given in terms of a Specific Absorption Rate (SAR), is now provided on all new phones. The SAR cannot exceed 1.6 watts per kilogram of tissue. Information on the SAR for a specific cell phone model can be obtained from the FCC at their web address, <https://gullfoss2.fcc.gov/prod/oet/cf/eas/reports/GenericSearch.cfm>

Further reading:

The following websites contain additional information about exposure to radio frequency and mobile phone safety. Referral to these sites does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of Health of any specific policy or statement contained in the material.

Need More Information?

Mobile Phone Use ~~Please Contact:~~ Factsheet

World Health Organization International
Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation
Protection.

<http://who.int/inf-fs/en/fact193.html>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Consumer
Update on Mobile Phones

www.fda.gov/cellphones/

Federal Communications Commission

www.fcc.gov/oet/rfsafety

International Agency for Research on Cancer

www.iarc.fr

Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones,
“The Stewart Report”

www.iegmp.org.uk

United Kingdom Department of Health

www.doh.gov.uk

[Mobile Phones and Health](#)

National Radiological Protection Board

www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/

Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association
(CTIA)

www.wow-com.com/

United States General Accounting Office,
Research and Regulatory Efforts on Mobile Phone
Health Issues, Report #GAO-01-545

www.gao.gov

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