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Radionuclides in drinking water - an overview: The EU directive, analysis, the Austrian standard, geographical distribution, removal and waste problems

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Drinking water is the most important food, therefore special care has to be taken for its purity. The European Union has issued a Directive on the Quality of Drinking Water, which also contains a chapter on radionuclides. The details will be discussed.

With rare exceptions only Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) is of importance for the dose from drinking water. NORM usually cannot be determined by putting a sample on the Ge-Detector. Radiochemistry is needed.

New methods have been introduced and the traditional measurement of Rn-222 and Ra-226 has been extended to other radionuclides like Ra-228, Po-210 and Pb-210.

The Austrian Standard on Compliance with the EU Indicative Dose will be presented and recommended to be used with country specific adaptations.

In this context the geographical distribution of radionuclide concentrations in drinking water are of importance and examples will be given.

Finally the question of purification of water arises. The results of a EU-project on removal of NORM (TENAWA) will be presented as well as the logical question of (radioactive) waste from the purification.

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