

Cell Phones

Everybody seems to have a cell phone these days. Cell phones are not really phones. They are two-way radios. A cell phone changes your voice into radio waves.

Lots of everyday items use radio waves. Radios, TVs, pagers, and cordless phones all use radio waves.

Another term for radio waves is radio frequency energy. The short term for that is RF. Large amounts of RF are harmful to humans. Cell phones use only a small amount of RF. But some people think that even a small amount of RF may be harmful.

How can large amounts of RF harm people?

Large amounts of RF can heat body tissue. The heated tissue can overheat other parts of the body. The eyes and testes are most likely to overheat from RF. That's because little blood goes to those areas. Blood can carry away large amounts of heat.

The amount of RF from cell phones, radios, and TV is too low to heat body tissue. Still, some people have questions about whether low levels of RF can hurt people. More studies are needed to find out what effects actually occur and whether they can hurt people.

How much RF do cell phones use?

Cell phones give out low levels of RF while they are in use. They give out very low levels of RF in stand-by mode.

Can cell phones be a health hazard?

So far, science has not shown that cell phones cause any health problems. But more studies are needed.

What is the FDA's role in cell phone safety?

The FDA does not review cell phones for safety before sale. The FDA only does that with new drugs and medical devices. But the FDA can act if cell phones are shown to cause health problems. The FDA can require cell phone makers to tell users about the danger. It can require makers to fix, replace, or recall the phones.

What is the FDA's advice on cell phone RF safety?

The FDA believes that:

- More studies on cell phone RF are needed. More studies could help show if it has any bad health effects.
- Cell phones should expose people to the least RF possible.
- People who use cell phones need to be told of any bad effects. The FDA would give users the facts.



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What is the FDA doing now about cell phone RF?

The FDA wants to find out more about cell phone RF. The FDA is working with other health groups to do more studies on RF. Cell phone RF can change the way some medical items work. Pacemakers and hearing aids can be affected. FDA standards for these items are already in place.

Are cell phones risky for children and teenagers?

So far, studies have not shown any bad effects for anyone from cell phone RF.

I'm worried about cell phone RF. How can I reduce any possible risks?

Again, research shows no bad effects from cell phone RF. But if you're still worried, you can:

- Use your cell phone less often.
- Keep the cell phone further away from your body. You can use a hands-free kit.
- Use a cell-phone head shield.

FDA Office of Women's Health <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

To Learn More:

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Phone: 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332)
<http://www.fda.gov>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Phone: 1-800-424-8802
<http://www.epa.gov>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Phone: 1-800-321-OSHA (1-800-321-6742)
<http://www.osha.gov>