

URANIUM in the Shiprock Area

Uranium is part of the earth. It is close to the surface throughout the southwest U.S. Uranium is part of the environment and is naturally occurring in soil and water. Uranium is also present in waste piles from uranium mines and mills. Exposure to uranium has health concerns for humans—some known, many unknown.

KNOW about mine and mill sites and contaminated water sources

There are abandoned uranium mines and mills on the Navajo Nation. There are contaminated water sources on the Navajo Nation.

- We cannot un-do past contact with uranium.
- We can lessen contact with uranium now and in the future.

LEARN how to recognize mines and contaminated water sources

IF YOU SEE SIGNS LIKE THIS:



STAY AWAY from the area.

- Learn where uranium mines were located and stay away even if there are no signs.
- DO NOT build, play on, ride ATVs, or make corrals at mine sites.
- DO NOT gather plants, or take gravel, dirt, sand or water from mine sites.

IF YOU SEE SIGNS LIKE THIS:



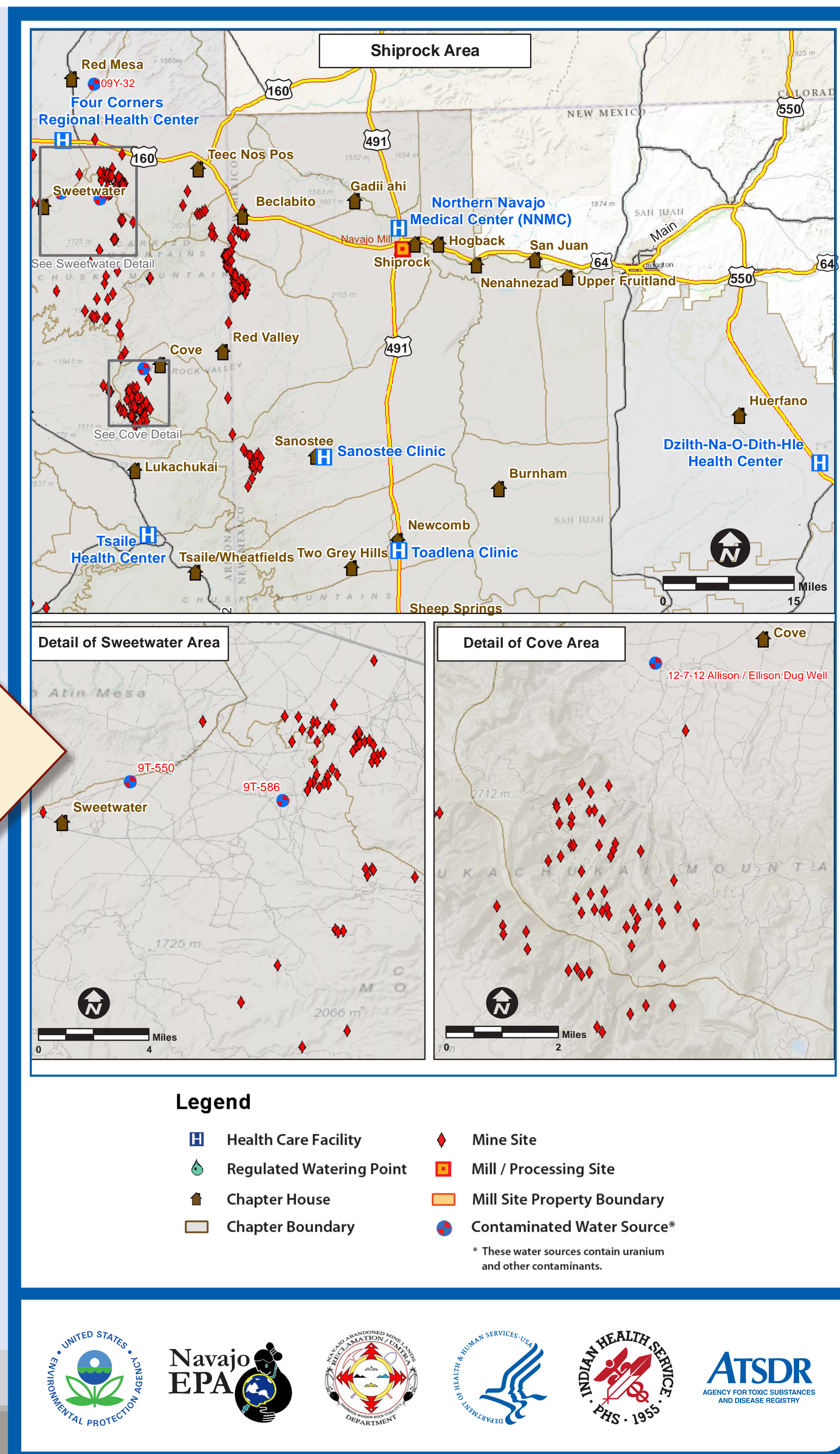
DO NOT use water from that source for human drinking, cooking or bathing. It is contaminated with uranium or other contaminants.

- DO NOT use contaminated water sources for human use, even if the water looks, smells and tastes good. Don't use water from contaminated sources for drinking, cooking, bathing or washing clothes or fruits and vegetables.
- ONLY use regulated water sources for human drinking, cooking or bathing. Regulated water sources are piped water in your home or regulated watering points (usually near Chapter Houses).

TEACH the location of mines and contaminated water sources

The map shows locations of abandoned uranium mines and contaminated water sources in this area.

- Stay away from mines. Mines can be dangerous to human health and safety.
- Only use regulated water sources for human drinking, cooking, and bathing.
- Livestock-use-only wells should not be used for human drinking, cooking, or bathing.



CARE for your family and yourself

Community-level exposure to uranium is not like the exposure of miners and millers, but it is still concerning for health. Exposure can occur by contact with contaminated soil, water, or radon gas. Here are suggestions to help decrease exposure and to promote good health:

SOIL

- Work and play away from mine sites.
- Do not gather gravel, sand or dirt near mine sites.
- Grow and gather plants away from mine sites.
- Graze livestock away from mine sites; if this is not possible, do not use parts where uranium concentrates—liver, kidneys and bones.

WATER

- If you have running water, use it. If you don't like the taste or color, try a filter.
- If you haul water for human use, use only regulated watering points and use containers and hoses approved for human drinking water.
- Clean hoses and containers before each use.
- Separate hoses used for human water and livestock water.

RADON

- Radon is a radioactive gas that comes from uranium.
- Radon is dangerous in enclosed spaces and is the second leading cause of lung cancer.
- You cannot see, taste or smell radon. But you can test for it.
- Get your home tested for radon and keep it well ventilated until you get the results.

CARING FOR YOUR HEALTH

There is not a lot of research to tell us exactly what community-level exposure does to the human body. But there is some information from research on people and animals.

Uranium exposure:

- Can cause kidney damage.
- Is linked to increased risk of high blood pressure and autoimmune diseases.
- May increase risks of cancers.
- May increase reproductive problems.

So, it is very important for anyone exposed to uranium to do the following:

- Prevent or manage diabetes and high blood pressure with healthy weight, healthy diet, daily exercise, and taking any prescribed medications correctly every day.
- Prevent cancer by no tobacco, healthy weight, eating well, and keeping up to date on cancer screening tests— Pap tests, mammograms, colonoscopy.
- Get regular health care and ask your provider to check on kidney, thyroid, liver, and heart health and check for auto-immune diseases.

To get help with questions about...	Please call...
... Abandoned mines	Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands Window Rock at (928) 871-6982 Shiprock at (505) 368-1220 Tuba City at (928) 871-6982
... Radon in your home, radon test kits	Navajo Nation EPA Radon Program at (928) 871-7703/7863 or (888) 643-7692
... Water from an unregulated water source; locations of unregulated water sources	Navajo Department of Water Resources at (928) 729-4003 or Navajo Public Water Systems at (928) 871-7755
... Water from a regulated watering point or piped water in your home	Navajo Tribal Utility Authority at (800) 528-5011
... Safe water hauling practices	Navajo Public Water Systems at (928) 871-7755
... Contaminated structures	Navajo Nation EPA Superfund Contaminated Structures Program at (800) 314-1846
... Uranium medical screening and monitoring program	Community Uranium Exposure – Journey to Healing, Navajo Area IHS at (505) 368-6311
... 5 Year Plan, U.S. EPA cleanup activities	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at (800) 231-3075 epa.gov/region9/superfund/navajo-nation

