

## A top supplier of medical isotopes closed through 2009

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An aging Canadian nuclear reactor responsible for production of one-third of the isotopes used in medical radiation treatment around the world will be out of service through at least the end of 2009, authorities said Wednesday.

The half-century old National Research Universal (NRU) reactor in Chalk River, Ontario was shut down on May 15 after a leak of radioactive water inside the reactor.

According to the latest information the reactor was undergoing repairs but officials said it was uncertain how soon that work would be completed.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) announced the delay on Wednesday, and said everything possible is being done to speed repairs to the aging facility.

"Returning the NRU to service to support the production of medical [isotopes](#) for Canadian patients and health care practitioners is our primary objective," said AECL's president and chief executive Hugh MacDiarmid.

"We have a dedicated team working around the clock to bring the NRU back to operation as quickly and as safely as possible. However, it is a complex task with many variables," he said in a statement.

Company officials said AECL is working closely with safety inspectors at the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) to repair the Chalk River reactor, while metallurgical and material experts are working with outside engineering firms on cleaning and repairing the reactor.

[Medical isotopes](#) produced by the Chalk River reactor are used to treat cancer and heart patients around the world.

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