

Finns run for iodine after blasts at Japanese nuclear plant

March 14 2011

Concerns about possible radiation from Japan's earthquake-damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant sparked a weekend run on iodine tablets as far away as Finland, the country's largest pharmacy chain said Monday.

"On Saturday there was a run on [iodine](#), but the situation calmed down and we were able to replenish the stock on Sunday," Yliopiston Apteekki spokesman Jari Kokkonen told AFP.

Kokkonen said that some of their pharmacies in central Finnish cities like Tampere and Jyvaeskylae ran out of iodine completely on Saturday.

He believes the run on iodine was mostly due to people flying to Japan or the region, adding that many travellers had called the company's hotline for advice.

Finland's radiation and nuclear safety authority STUK said in a statement there was no chance the danger in Japan would lead to people in Finland needing to take iodine.

"Iodine tablets should not be taken without recommendations from officials, because the risk of side effects is greater than the possible benefit," the authority warned.

In neighbouring Sweden, a spokeswoman for the largest pharmacy chain, state-owned Apoteket, told AFP many worried customers asked about

iodine over the weekend, but that the chain did not sell more tablets than usual.

The Fukushima 1 plant was hit by two explosions at buildings housing two reactors since a massive 8.9-magnitude earthquake hit Japan Friday, and the [cooling system](#) at a third [reactor](#) stopped working Monday.

Chief government spokesman Yukio Edano said that radiation around the plant 250 kilometres (155 miles) north of Tokyo was at a tolerable level for humans.

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