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**NUCLEAR MYTH:**  
*“All nuclear  
waste is  
hazardous for  
10,000 years.”*

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## **REALITY:**

*Nuclear waste itself is only hazardous for a few decades, with less than 3% of the total waste being radioactive for longer than that.*

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## FAST FACTS ABOUT NUCLEAR:

### **Nuclear Spent Fuel Management**

Nuclear fuel management is highly regulated, utilizing policies and practices to [ensure the safest handling of fuel through every stage of its life cycle](#). Unlike many media portrayals, nuclear waste is not a glowing green goop oozing into our lives; it consists of [sets of sealed metal tubes containing uranium pellets, also known as fuel assemblies](#). These rods typically generate clean energy in a plant for about 5 years before being transferred to on-site spent fuel pools, [which are steel lined pools made of concrete that is several feet thick](#). This fuel is usually cooled in the pools for at least 5 years, though the industry standard is about 10 years, before being transferred into structures known as “dry cask storage.” These [thick, concrete structures built to contain the rods as the radioactive material decays](#). The waste itself is [only hazardous for a few decades, with less than 3% of the total waste](#) being radioactive for longer than that.

Used fuel is not completely useless either – [some advanced reactors feature designs](#) that run specifically run on used fuel, significantly increasing the use life of the rods. The nuclear industry continues to innovate fuel management processes consistently, including researching ways to partition or transmute waste [into less radioactive forms](#).