



## Examining the Nature of Alpha Particles

Sean Martin\*

Department of Diagnostic Radiology, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

\*Corresponding author: Sean Martin, Department of Diagnostic Radiology, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; E-mail: martinsean@gmail.com

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### Description

Alpha particles are a type of ionizing radiation consisting of helium nuclei with a charge of +2 and a mass of 4 atomic units. They are produced by the decay of heavy radioactive elements such as uranium, thorium, and radium. Alpha particles are the least penetrating form of radiation, but they can be extremely damaging to living cells if ingested or inhaled.

Alpha particles have a mass of 4 atomic units and a charge of +2. Due to their size and charge, they are strongly ionizing and have a short range in matter. In air, they travel only a few centimeters before being stopped by collisions with air molecules. In contrast, they can penetrate only a few micrometers in tissue, making them less harmful than other forms of radiation such as gamma rays or beta particles. However, alpha particles can be extremely damaging to living cells if they are ingested or inhaled, as they can deposit their energy in a very small volume of tissue [1-3].

### Sources of Alpha Particles

Alpha particles are primarily produced by the decay of heavy radioactive elements such as uranium, thorium, and radium. These elements undergo alpha decay, which is the emission of an alpha particle from the nucleus. The alpha decay process releases a large amount of energy in the form of kinetic energy of the alpha particle and recoil of the remaining nucleus. Alpha particles can also be produced in nuclear reactions, such as in the fusion of hydrogen isotopes in a nuclear reactor or in the collision of heavy ions in a particle accelerator [4-6].

### Applications of Alpha Particles

Alpha particles have several applications in various fields, including medicine, industry, and scientific research. In medicine, alpha particles can be used for cancer treatment through a technique called alpha particle therapy. In this therapy, alpha-emitting radionuclides are selectively delivered to cancer cells, where they deposit their energy and cause localized damage to the tumor. This technique has shown promising results in the treatment of certain types of cancer, such as prostate cancer [7].

In industry, alpha particles are used in the measurement of the thickness and composition of thin films. Alpha particle spectroscopy can provide information on the energy and mass of the particles,

which can be used to identify the elements present in the sample. This technique is commonly used in the semiconductor industry for the characterization of thin films [8,9].

In scientific research, alpha particles are used in various fields such as nuclear physics, materials science, and environmental science. In nuclear physics, alpha decay is an important process for studying the properties of atomic nuclei. In materials science, alpha particles can be used for the characterization of materials and the study of radiation damage in materials. In environmental science, alpha particles can be used to measure the concentration of radionuclides in soil and water samples [10].

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