

Radioactive decay (also known as nuclear decay or radioactivity) is the process by which an unstable atomic nucleus loses energy (in terms of mass in its rest frame) by emitting radiation, such as an alpha particle, beta particle with neutrino or only a neutrino in the case of electron capture, gamma ray, or electron in the case of internal conversion. A material containing such unstable nuclei is considered radioactive. Certain highly excited short-lived nuclear states can decay through neutron emission, or more rarely, proton emission.

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