

Preventing Potential Exposure

Coldwater Creek—North St. Louis County, MO

June 2016

This fact sheet gives general recommendations for reducing exposure to hazardous substances, including low-level radioactive materials, that might be present in Coldwater Creek. You can take action to prevent possible exposure to contaminated material in Coldwater Creek while agencies continue to test the creek for contamination and assess the possible health risks.

Exposure to hazardous substances may harm health, but harm will not occur without exposure. You can reduce or prevent potential exposure to hazardous substances associated with Coldwater Creek by avoiding direct contact with soil, sediment, or water in or near the creek and in places where creek soils may have been moved by flooding or for landscaping. If you do not live near the creek, the chance of coming in contact with creek contamination is greatly reduced.



How can I protect my family from contamination in Coldwater Creek?

If you live near or next to the creek and are concerned about possible exposures, we recommend you take these actions:



- Avoid getting in the creek.
- Do not allow children to play in or along the creek.
- Do not eat fish, animals, or plants from the creek.
- Do not drink creek water.



- Avoid digging in your yard if you live near or next to the creek.
- If digging is needed or if you get in the creek, wear long sleeves, pants, gloves, and closed toe shoes.
- Wash those clothes separately and take a shower to wash off any soil or sediment.



- Wash using mild soap; you do not need to scrub.
- Wash your hands after touching creek soil or creek water.
- Avoid getting creek soil or creek water in your mouth and in open sores.



- If you are planting a garden, use raised beds and bring in clean soils. Do not water your garden with creek water.
- Thoroughly wash any garden vegetables before eating with clean water from your home.



- Root vegetables, like carrots and potatoes, should be peeled.
- Avoid bringing potentially contaminated soil or water into your home.
- Use doormats, take your shoes off at the door, and wipe soil or water off pets before letting them inside.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Division of Community Health Investigations



How was Coldwater Creek contaminated?

Radioactive materials were extracted from raw ore in downtown St. Louis, MO, for the United States' Manhattan Project. The waste from this process contained uranium, radium, thorium, and other naturally occurring radioactive materials. The waste was stored for years in industrial areas near Coldwater Creek and, over time, the creek was contaminated. While the source areas have been cleaned up, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is still investigating, sampling, and cleaning up Coldwater Creek.



How could I be exposed to radioactive materials in Coldwater Creek?

You could be exposed to radioactive materials in Coldwater Creek by:

- Coming into direct contact with contaminated creek soils or sediments.
- Getting contaminated creek soils or sediments in your body.
- Spending time near contaminated soils or sediments.

What is ATSDR doing?

In November of 2015, ATSDR began a Public Health Assessment to find out if people are being, have been, or may be exposed to radioactive materials or other hazardous substances from Coldwater Creek. It will take time to gather and evaluate available environmental data. In the meantime, ATSDR is providing general guidelines and information to help residents currently living near Coldwater Creek to prevent or reduce potential exposure.

Who can I contact for more information about Coldwater Creek?

If you would like to discuss your environmental public health concerns or talk to ATSDR about our Public Health Assessment you can email the Coldwater Creek team at ColdwaterCreek@cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or visit our website at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/coldwater_creek/index.html

If you would like to learn more about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) and environmental sampling and cleanup, you can call 1-314-331-8000 or visit their website at: <http://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Missions/CentersofExpertise/FormerlyUtilizedSitesRemedialActionProgram.aspx>