



The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is the federal public health agency whose mission is to prevent adverse human health effects that result from hazardous waste exposure. The agency conducts assessments or evaluations to determine whether communities have been exposed to hazardous waste, and provides health information to prevent harmful exposures and related adverse effects to public health.

[www.atsdr.cdc.gov](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov)

1.888.42.ATSDR

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## Environmental Health

# *Mossville, LA, Follow-Up Exposure Investigation*

## What is an exposure investigation?

ATSDR uses exposure investigations to find out if people are coming into contact with chemicals at unusual levels. These investigations often involve testing people and the local environment for chemicals.

## Why did ATSDR conduct this exposure investigation?

The purpose of this investigation was to find out if people living in the Mossville community are currently exposed to unusual levels of dioxin. As part of the investigation, ATSDR tested people who had previous blood dioxin tests. ATSDR also tested locally grown food, locally caught fish, and persons' home environments.

## Introduction

ATSDR conducted an exposure investigation to see if people living in the Mossville community are being exposed to high levels of dioxins. As part of the investigation, ATSDR tested people who had previous blood dioxin tests. ATSDR also tested locally grown food, locally caught fish, and persons' home environments.

The investigation showed that dioxins are not currently a health concern for Mossville residents, with the following exceptions:

- Some people older than 45 years did have higher levels of dioxin in their blood, but not enough to cause illness
- Some local fish contain high levels of dioxins. People should follow safety precautions about eating those fish.

## Who was tested?

Of the 22 people tested in this follow-up investigation,

- all were current or former Mossville residents,
- 17 were first tested for dioxin during ATSDR's initial 1998 Mossville exposure investigation, and
- 5 were first tested in 1997 by a local law firm.

## Additional testing

For each person who had their blood tested, ATSDR also tested

- soil from their yard and indoor dust from their house;
- well water (if used for drinking);
- fruit, vegetables, and nuts grown in their yard; and
- locally caught fish.

## What did ATSDR find?

### Results of blood testing

- ATSDR found elevated blood dioxin levels in many of the people who were 45 years of age or older.
- Persons younger than 45 years old had blood dioxin levels that were similar to people of the same age in the United States.
- ATSDR did not find a link between the level of dioxin in a person's blood and the level of dioxin in their home environment.
- Most persons' blood dioxin level decreased since they were first tested.

### Results of environmental testing

- No dioxins were found in water from the three wells that were tested.
- ATSDR did not find increased dioxin levels in soil and indoor dust.
- ATSDR did not find increased dioxin levels in locally-raised fruit, vegetables, and nuts.
- ATSDR **did** find high dioxin levels in fish caught in Bayou d'Inde and under the I-210 bridge. Fish advisories have been posted for these water bodies. You can find more information on the Internet at:

<http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/1631/default.aspx>

## ATSDR's conclusions

- Elevated blood dioxin levels probably resulted from past exposures.
- Blood dioxin levels in persons tested are not likely to cause ill effects, such as chloracne and elevated liver enzymes.
- Dioxin levels in some fish were high enough to be a concern.
- Dioxin levels in soil, indoor dust, well water, and homegrown fruit, vegetables, and nuts were not at levels of concern.

## Where to get more information

If you have questions about this exposure investigation, please contact ATSDR toll-free at 1-888-422-8737 and refer to the Mossville, LA, exposure investigation.

To request a copy of the exposure investigation report, call the toll-free number above or write to ATSDR at:

Chief, Records Center  
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