Y-12 Uranium Releases

Why is ATSDR at the Oak Ridge Reservation?

ATSDR is the principal federal public health agency charged with evaluating the human health effects of exposure to hazardous substances in the environment. Congress has directed the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to assess whether releases of hazardous substances from the Oak Ridge Reservation could have affected the health of people in communities near the reservation. ATSDR is working with the Oak Ridge Reservation Health Effects Subcommittee (ORRHES) to ensure that the public health questions of people living in the Oak Ridge Reservation area are answered.

The Oak Ridge Reservation Health Effects Subcommittee was formed in 1999 under the guidelines of the Federal Advisory Committee Act to serve as an advisory group to ATSDR and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on matters related to public health activities and research at the Oak Ridge Reservation. Members of the Subcommittee represent diverse interests, expertise, backgrounds, and communities. The Subcommittee provides an opportunity for all people to comment on issues discussed and helps prioritize issues evaluated by ATSDR.

What conclusion did ATSDR reach about health effects related to Y-12 uranium releases?

ATSDR’s extensive public health assessment concludes that residents living near the Oak Ridge Reservation were exposed to uranium from the Y-12 plant. However, the amount of exposure was too low to be a public health hazard. ATSDR categorizes the Y-12 uranium releases as being no apparent health hazard. This means that people were exposed to uranium but the level of exposure is not expected to result in adverse health effects.

Where can I get more information?

Y-12 Uranium Releases

Summary of Public Health Implications From Off-Site Exposures to Y-12 Uranium Releases

Please note:

ATSDR and ORRHES do not address public health issues related to workplace exposure or risk. Information specific to workers can be found on the Internet at http://cedr.lbl.gov.

This site provides information about epidemiologic studies of U.S. Department of Energy workers, including studies of Oak Ridge Reservation workers at the Y-12, X-10, and K-25 sites.

PAST 1944–1995

CURRENT 1995–2002

The level of uranium that people living near the Y-12 plant received in the past is NOT a public health hazard.

ATSDR does not expect kidney problems, cancer, developmental effects, or any other harmful health effects to result from exposure to uranium released from the Y-12 plant.

The level of uranium that people living near the Y-12 plant are receiving today is NOT a public health hazard.

ATSDR does not expect kidney problems, cancer, developmental effects, or any other harmful health effects to result from exposure to uranium released from the Y-12 plant.

Key Issues and Concerns Evaluated

- Breathing dust or particles containing uranium
- Eating vegetables grown in the area surrounding the Y-12 plant
- Playing in the East Fork Poplar Creek floodplain soil and water
- Contacting the soil in the Scarboro community area
- Eating fish from East Fork Poplar Creek
- Eating beef or drinking milk from cows raised near the Y-12 area
Summary of Public Health Implications From Off-Site Exposures to Y-12 Uranium Releases

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<th>Timeframe for Exposure</th>
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<td><strong>PAST</strong> 1944–1995</td>
<td>Breathing dust or particles containing uranium&lt;br&gt; Eating vegetables grown in the area surrounding the Y-12 plant&lt;br&gt; Playing in the East Fork Poplar Creek floodplain soil and water&lt;br&gt; Contacting the soil in the Scarboro community area&lt;br&gt; Eating fish from East Fork Poplar Creek&lt;br&gt; Eating beef or drinking milk from cows raised near the Y-12 area</td>
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<td>The level of uranium that people living near the Y-12 plant are receiving today is <strong>NOT</strong> a public health hazard. ATSDR does not expect kidney problems, cancer, developmental effects, or any other harmful health effects to result from exposure to uranium released from the Y-12 plant.</td>
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Does the Uranium Released From the Y-12 Plant Affect the Health of People Living Nearby?

Highlights from ATSDR's evaluation of potential health effects

People living near the Oak Ridge Reservation want to know if their health could be affected by uranium releases from the Y-12 plant. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has been tasked by the Oak Ridge Reservation Health Effects Subcommittee (ORRHES) to ensure that the public health questions of people living in the Oak Ridge Reservation area are answered.

What conclusion did ATSDR reach about health effects related to Y-12 uranium releases?

ATSDR's extensive public health assessment concludes that residents living near the Oak Ridge Reservation were exposed to uranium but the level of exposure is not expected to result in adverse health effects.

Where can I get more information?


You may also contact ATSDR's Oak Ridge Field Office at 865-220-0295 or contact ATSDR headquarters toll free at 1-888-42ATSDR (1-888-422-8737).