

Probable Link Between Teflon Chemical And Cancer

John Raby, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Mid-Ohio Valley residents who settled a lawsuit will be eligible for medical monitoring programs after a science panel concluded a probable link exists between exposure to a chemical used by a DuPont plant in West Virginia and testicular and kidney cancers, attorneys for the residents said Monday.

While issuing its findings on testicular and kidney cancers, the C8 Science Panel also found no link between the chemical, also known as or perfluorooctanoic acid, and 19 other types of cancer, along with adult onset diabetes.

"We are pleased that the community now has some definitive answers to their concerns about whether they have been put at risk for serious adverse health effects because of their exposure to (C8) in their drinking water," said Robert Bilott, an attorney for the plaintiffs.

Harry Deitzler, another attorney for the plaintiffs, said the probable link requires DuPont to spend as much as \$235 million on medical monitoring programs to help detect the onset of C8-linked diseases among residents in the settlement. A medical panel was selected last week to determine what extent of monitoring may be appropriate.

In addition, Deitzler said members of the class-action settlement can now pursue personal injury or wrongful death claims against DuPont relating to diseases that the science panel concluded has probable links to C8. Attorneys are reviewing potential individual claims of clients who qualify, Deitzler said.

DuPont has paid more than \$20 million to treat water supplies under the settlement, and Monday's findings "insure that DuPont will continue to fund" water treatment upgrades, he said.

DuPont, which uses C8 at its Washington Works plant near Parkersburg, issued a statement Monday defending its actions to minimize C8 exposure and that the company "will continue to meet its obligations under the West Virginia litigation."

DuPont plans to stop making and using C8 by 2015.

Since being formed in 2005 as part of the class-action settlement, the three-member science panel has evaluated data collected from about 70,000 residents.

The panel interviewed 28,000 residents and 4,000 workers from 2009 to 2011 about their medical histories. More than 3,600 respondents reported having some type of cancer. Some cases weren't validated because the panel didn't receive consent to

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review medical records, while others weren't validated because medical records failed to confirm the diagnosis.

"We didn't include people simply because they told us they had cancer," said Dr. Kyle Steenland, a panel member. "We had to back it up with official records, and that took time and great attention to detail."

In December, the science panel released a study on reproduction issues that said some pregnant women exposed to C8 reported high blood pressure, though there were not enough cases to show a direct link between the two. An earlier report issued by the science panel found a "small but clearly present" association between C8 and preeclampsia.

The science panel is expected to issue more comprehensive findings by July.

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