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Associated Press



DuPont plans detailed cancer study at W.Va. plant

By TIM HUBER 06.09.08, 4:28 PM ET

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CHARLESTON, W.VA. - **DuPont** is planning a detailed study looking at why workers at a West Virginia plant appear to be getting a rare form of cancer at a higher rate than normal.

The study DuPont (nyse: [DD - news - people](#)) hopes to start this summer is designed to help determine whether anything at the Washington Works plant near Parkersburg is causing carcinoid tumors, company epidemiologist Morel Symons said Monday. Early work suggests there are more cases than would be expected at the plant, he said.

But that's merely a suggestion, because Symons says little is known about what causes carcinoid tumors, which tend to appear in the gastrointestinal tract and sometimes the lungs. "We're facing a situation where we have limited information."

DuPont first began looking into the situation in 2006 after two workers at the plant were diagnosed with carcinoid tumors.

"That raised a flag for us," plant manager Bill Hopkins said. DuPont has since found 18 more instances of employees with carcinoid tumors across the country, including five more at Washington Works. The cancer cases date back to the 1980s and include current and retired employees.

Washington Works, however, is the only DuPont plant with enough cases to warrant further study, Symons said.

The plant has a significant public health history. DuPont uses the

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chemical ammonium perfluorooctanoate - commonly referred to as C8 - to make the nonstick product Teflon at Washington Works.

C8 releases from the plant resulted in a class-action lawsuit that claimed the chemical contaminated six Ohio Valley water districts. Scientists researching whether C8 poses a health risk are conducting 10 studies to follow up on health screening of residents involved in the lawsuit.

Hopkins said there's no reason to believe the cancer situation at Washington Works is related to C8 or any other chemical.

DuPont maintains the chemical is not hazardous to human health. A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency science panel has said C8 is a "likely" carcinogen.

DuPont is following a standard approach recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for studying the cancer situation at the plant, Symons said.

"Hopefully by the end of the year, I'll have a fairly substantial report on what we've determined occupationally," he said.

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