Health Effects of Chemicals at Superfund Sites

- Hazardous waste sites pose a serious risk to public health. The Superfund program was created to mitigate human health risks by cleaning up these sites.

- Risk assessments are done at each site to determine the threat level that the site poses to human health.
  - Assessors seek to identify a “safe level” – the level of a hazardous substance at which health issues are unlikely, and cancer risk is low.

- The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) maintains a listing of hazardous substances found at Superfund sites.1
  - Toxicological profiles that detail associated human health risks are created for each hazardous substance on the registry.

- Notable human health risks associated with hazardous substances released at Superfund sites include2:
  - Cancer
  - Birth defects
  - Nerve damage
  - Liver damage

- Toxic chemicals have also been associated with developmental and behavioral issues in children. Children conceived to mothers living near a Superfund site were found to be3:
  - 7.4% more likely to repeat a grade level.
  - 6.6% more likely to be suspended from school.
  - 10% more likely to be diagnosed with a cognitive disability.
  - At risk for lower standardized test scores.

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