

CDC has released important information in a draft report on the preliminary results of the Hanford Thyroid Disease Study (HTDS). Findings from this draft report can be useful to individuals, communities, health care providers, and government public health planners and policy makers in deciding what steps to take next.

EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

CDC will work with other state and federal government agencies, area public health providers and Hanford community organizations to develop appropriate education and communication programs regarding:

- Results of this study and what they mean to Hanford area residents;
- The signs and symptoms of thyroid disease;
- Special concerns and needs of Hanford area residents regarding thyroid diseases or other health outcomes that could be related to Hanford;
- Communication/Education with health care providers to share the results of this project, when and how to examine for thyroid disease, and how to discuss HTDS results with patients; and
- Availability of other federal and state programs.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTIVITIES

CDC will work closely with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the state health agencies of Washington, Oregon and Idaho and the Hanford Health Effects Subcommittee to determine the most appropriate public health follow-up activities at Hanford related to the HTDS findings. Several public health activities are currently in place or being considered. They are:

Follow-up of HTDS Cohort

CDC is considering a follow-up of the HTDS cohort (study population) in order to examine the natural history of thyroid nodules and ultrasound detected abnormalities. This will allow scientists to determine if these small nodules and abnormalities progress to thyroid cancer.

Follow-up of Mortality Analysis

While conducting the HTDS, researchers found that the death rates in the study population were slightly higher than predicted, based on death rates in the state of Washington for the same period. In addition, there was an elevation in deaths related to birth defects, complications of pregnancy and delivery, and premature birth. Preliminary results from the HTDS indicate that the increase in mortality was evident before releases from Hanford began and continued after the Hanford facility started operation. The reasons for this apparent elevated rate in overall mortality are not known. However, a study of infant and fetal deaths in eight Washington counties during the years 1940-52 is currently being conducted by the ATSDR with the results expected by late spring. Though the counties in this ATSDR study are different from those included in the HTDS, the study will provide additional information on rates of infant mortality, fetal death and pre-term birth by geographic area.

ATSDR's Proposed Medical Monitoring Program (HMMP)

The Hanford Medical Monitoring Program was created as a reasonable response to alleviate concern of those people living around Hanford who have an estimated increased exposure to I-131. After taking into consideration the results of the Institute of Medicine Report on I-131 as well as the HTDS, and upon discussions with community and tribal representatives, the medical monitoring program for Hanford will be modified. The modifications will provide for information and education for eligible people and clinicians to ensure that informed decision making occurs. If after individuals are informed of the HTDS results and the risk of screening, they decide they still wish to be medically evaluated, the HMMP will assure high quality testing and minimize the risk associated with thyroid screening. For more information, call the ATSDR at 1-888-42ATSDR and ask for "Hanford Medical Monitoring."