

Neighborhood Update

August 2013

Koppers Hazardous Waste Site



Florida Department of Health Cautions Nearby Residents to Limit Eating Zucchini Grown in Soil with More Than 23 ppt Dioxins

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) work jointly to protect the public's health. We supply facts from studies on toxic chemicals to help people who live near hazardous waste sites learn how to stay safe. If we find a health threat, we let those who live nearby know about it right away.

Based on public comment and further research, Florida DOH recommends that people should limit eating zucchini grown in soil with more than 23 parts per trillion (ppt) dioxins. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found 7 properties (and approximately 27 properties that are adjacent to properties or street right of ways) near the Koppers site with more than 23 ppt dioxins. People should follow this advice until the responsible party replaces the soil in 2014. Florida DOH notified the property owners. An adequate margin of safety exists for zucchini growing in soil with less than 23 ppt dioxins.

Zucchini are the only produce known with the potential to absorb enough dioxins to affect health. Even other closely related plants, like pumpkins, cucumbers, and other squash do not absorb as much dioxins. It is safe to eat other homegrown fruits and vegetables.

The estimated dose from eating zucchini grown in soil with the highest dioxins level (70 ppt) is close to levels where non-cancer illness may occur. Health effects may include thyroid changes and fertility problems. However, illness would only be expected after a long period of time (10 to 30 years) of eating a typical serving (0.4 to 2 ounces) of contaminated zucchini on a daily basis.

The estimated dose from eating zucchini grown in soil with the highest dioxins level (70 ppt) for a lifetime (70 years) could also result in a "low" increase in the risk of cancer. This is an upper estimate of the increased cancer risk. The actual increased cancer risk is likely lower. There are many unknowns in assessing the health risk.

Anyone growing zucchini in a yard, or a yard adjacent to a property or street right of way, where the EPA found dioxins at more than 23 ppt can call the Florida DOH to discuss testing.

The final Florida DOH report on the January 2012 off-site soil tests will reflect this change. The report will also address other public comments. It is expected later this summer.

Until the responsible party replaces the soil in 2014, residents should limit eating zucchini grown in, or adjacent to, properties and street right-of-ways with more than 23 ppt dioxins.

Ongoing Advice Related to the Site

Florida DOH still suggests that people living near the site should:

1. Wash hands with soap and water after they touch bare soil.
2. Keep children from playing in the city easement next to the site.

3. Mow lawns only when it is not dry and dusty.
4. House chickens kept for eggs in coops or cages to cut the chance that the birds will eat dioxins in soil. (Note: The City of Gainesville limits people to two chickens per home.)

Also, the responsible party should clean up dioxins from surface soil around nearby homes.

Future Health Plans

Florida DOH will:

- Let people who live near the site know when a report on January 2012 off-site soil tests is final.
- Let the people know when a report on testing of indoor dust of nearby homes for dioxins is final.
- Review the results of June and October 2012 off-site soil tests.
- Keep the people up-to-date on any new findings.

More about the Koppers Site

The site is at 200 N.W. 23rd Avenue west of North Main Street. Since 1916, wood was treated there to stop rot. Over the years, some waste leaked into soil and groundwater. In 1984, EPA added the site to the National Priorities List (NPL). People who live west of the site have health concerns about the site.

Since 1989, the Florida DOH and ATSDR have:

- Advised the posting of warning signs where needed.
- Asked EPA to do more testing on- and off-site.
- Found the site is a likely health risk.
- Reviewed tests of soil, groundwater, and mud in creek beds.
- Warned people to keep off the site.
- Written 10 reports to respond to concerns.

For More Details

About health or any Florida DOH health report about Koppers:

- Randy Merchant: 1-877-798-2772 (randy_merchant@doh.state.fl.us)
- Anthony Dennis: 352-334-7930 (anthony_dennis@doh.state.fl.us)

About cleanup of the site or dust testing:

- Rusty Kestle, U.S. EPA: 404-562-8819 (Kestle.Rusty@epa.gov)

See all the reports written concerning the Koppers site!

They are posted online:

www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/superfund/pha.htm

or: www.doh.state.fl.us/chdalachua/

Or you may request a copy one of two other ways:

By phone: toll-free 877-798-2772

or by e-mail: phtoxicology@doh.state.fl.us



**Comments and Questions
About the Koppers site, Gainesville, Florida – August 2013**

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE:

- 1. This fact sheet was clear. **Yes** **Mostly** **Some** **No**
- 2. I am now aware that residents should limit eating zucchini grown in, or adjacent to, properties and street right-of-ways with more than 23 ppt dioxins. **Yes** **Mostly** **Some** **No**
- 3. I am now aware that Florida DOH is making a change about this to its last soil report. **Yes** **Mostly** **Some** **No**
- 4. I am now aware of some of future site plans. **Yes** **Mostly** **Some** **No**
- 5. I am satisfied with the Florida DOH's efforts to keep me informed about this site. **Yes** **Mostly** **Some** **No**

My health concerns or other comments are:

Fill this form out, fold in thirds, add a postage stamp and mail to the address on the back of this page. Or save a stamp by calling our toll-free number (877-798-2772) to give us your comments or by sending them via e-mail to phtoxicology@doh.state.fl.us

Please give us your:

Name: _____ Phone () _____

Address: _____

City: _____, FL Zipcode: _____

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Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State __ Zip _____

**Please place
First class
Postage here**

Randy Merchant
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