

Section D

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UW arsenic study near the smelter

TACOMA — A University of Washington team is set to begin a study of people in communities near the Asarco smelter who have relatively high levels of arsenic in their bodies.

The elevated arsenic levels show up in the urine and hair of some children in Ruston.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency has linked arsenic from the smelter to lung cancer. However, Asarco officials deny the emissions cause any public health problems.

The central question of the study is whether people are ingesting arsenic by breathing emissions from the smelter or in some other way, such as inhaling and eating dirt and dust contaminated over the past 70 years.

The smelter is expected to close in the first quarter of this year.