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Dioxin and Cancer

Dioxin and Cancer

When I was in the eighth grade my science project was about the effects of Agent Orange. That was over 25 years ago and it blows my mind to see that the long term effects are still being measured.

A study of 1,495 veterans who underwent radical prostatectomy to remove their cancerous prostates showed that the 206 exposed to Agent Orange had nearly a 50 percent increased risk of their cancer recurring despite the fact that their cancer seemed relatively non aggressive at the time of surgery. And, their cancer came back with a vengeance: the time it took the prostate specific antigen, or PSA, level to double – an indicator of aggressiveness – was eight months versus more than 18 months in non-exposed veterans.

While researchers are not yet sure what the reason for this increase is I've got a suggestion, Dioxin! If you're not familiar Agent Orange is most widely known as a defoliant used in the Vietnam War. The chemical in Agent Orange that causes the defoliation is dioxin, a known carcinogen.

Why should you care? Because dioxin is still out there. Without making this into a science class I'm going to give a few links. The FDA has a site that talks about the <u>"acceptable" levels of dioxin in the food supply</u>. The <u>World Health Organization</u> also has an informative paper on dioxin.

So lots of organizations raise money to find the "cure" for cancer and we get advice to stop smoking. But have you seen anyone working to get rid of something like this that we KNOW causes cancer and has NO SAFE LEVEL of exposure?

Looking at the world through the eyes of a young cancer survivor.