



The **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)** is the federal public health agency whose mission is to prevent adverse human health effects that result from hazardous waste exposure. The agency conducts assessments or evaluations to determine whether communities have been exposed to hazardous waste, and provides health information to prevent harmful exposures and related adverse effects to public health.

www.atsdr.cdc.gov

1.888.42.ATSDR

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Environmental
Health



Arsenic in Soil

Omaha, Nebraska

Soil and your health

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) found that the amount of arsenic in some yards in Omaha, Nebraska might pose a health concern for some children.

Arsenic in soil can get into your body from hand-to-mouth activity

- While playing
- While working in your yard

Soil pica

Some preschool children eat large amounts of soil while playing and exploring their world. This is normal for preschool-aged children and is called soil pica behavior.

Soil pica behavior is a concern for children who live in areas with high arsenic levels in soil. After eating large amounts of soil (about 1 teaspoon) with high levels of arsenic, these children could have health problems, such as:

- nausea or upset stomach,
- vomiting,
- swelling of the face,
- stomach cramps,
- diarrhea, or
- headaches

What should you do to avoid contact with arsenic?

- Don't eat or drink when gardening or playing outside.
- Wet-mop floors and clean window sills with wet rags.
- Leave shoes at the door.
- Wash your hands and children's hands often.

Long-time residents

Adults and children who live in areas with high levels of arsenic in the soil can be exposed to small amounts of arsenic every day. This can happen because of hand-to-mouth activity. Long term exposure to arsenic over several decades might increase their risk of some types of cancer, such as cancer of the skin, lungs, bladder, kidney, and liver.

Contact Us

ATSDR has prepared a report on arsenic contamination in east Omaha, Nebraska. This report is called Public Health Consultation, Arsenic in Soil in East Omaha, Nebraska. A copy of the report is available at this Web address:

www.atsdr.cdc.gov/sites/omahash52.

If you want more information about ATSDR's work concerning arsenic in soil at east Omaha, contact

Dr. David Mellard, toxicologist, at (404)-498-0443 or toll free: 1-888-422-8737,

or **Ms. Sue Casteel**, ATSDR's regional representative in Kansas City, Missouri at (913)-551-1312.