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Residents Claim Cancer Cluster Near Ft. Detrick

Your Side with a health warning for people who live near Fort Detrick.

Researchers say the soil may be contaminated, causing health problems. Residents whose family members are dying have teamed up with experts to insist there is contamination at Fort Detrick is leading to deadly forms of cancer for people living in Frederick.

"I believe the people of Frederick needs to know there is a serial killer in their backyard called Fort Detrick," said Randy White, whose daughter and wife are among the 400 neighborhood residents with cancer in Frederick. He insists it's a cancer cluster caused by Agent Orange and other toxins tested or used at Fort Detrick.

The residents say the B-11 section of Fort Detrick, running along Shookstown Road, is considered to have the highest levels of contamination.

Bill Krantz spent 76 years on his Shookstown Road family farm. Five of his immediate family members were diagnosed with cancer.

"It's been an awfully hard time, especially my wife being sick," Krantz said. "It's been a year and a half of something you wouldn't believe, caused by something we thought was never going to happen there. Be cause we lived there all our lives."

Fort Detrick officials say Agent Orange was used, as well as industrial solvents. Officials are taking steps to clean up the contamination but admit it's not complete.

Along Shookstown Road, where there are many homes, crews digging had no idea there might be possible contamination.... Neither did many residents.

"They're going to check it," said Tom Fryer, who has lived in Frederick for ten years. "If it's not safe, they're not going to let you drink it."

"That makes me a little nervous because I definitely drink from my tap and if my well is in the contaminated area, that would make me nervous," said Georgi Pisano, a five-year resident of Frederick.

Randy White is worried the groundwater is just one part of the problem. He wants a congressional investigation.

"I believe the water is a small percentage of what we're talking about," White said. "You're talking vapor intrusion where it comes up through the ground. You're talking about our streams, our creeks. Agent Orange is one of the most deadly chemicals known to man today and they sprayed the entire area."

Fort Detrick officials are not confirming any cancer clusters, but have met with area residents and say they are checking records to try and determine how much Agent Orange was used at the military site. Meantime they are continuing work to try and cover the contaminated landfills, but say some seepage is expected.