Facts about
Exposure Investigations

Washington State Department of Health

What	Washington State Department of Health (Health) looks at environmental and health data to determine if contact with chemicals in the environment could be harmful to your health. Sometimes, the information we need is missing or not available. When that happens, we might work with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to conduct an exposure investigation or EI. We may collect and analyze biologic (blood or urine) samples or environmental (soil, water, or air) samples in order to better understand if exposure to a contaminant- like dust or sulfur dioxide- could impact your health.
Who	Health has a cooperative agreement with ATSDR. ATSDR is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is the federal public health agency responsible for health issues related to hazardous waste sites. ATSDR is available to help us with exposure investigations.
When	We conduct an EI to: • Understand if you may be exposed to contaminants in the environment • Identify how you might be exposed to those contaminants • Evaluate possible health impacts if you are exposed to contaminants
How	Depending on what we are trying to understand, we gather different types of information. There are two main types of EIs: • **Biomedical testing** includes collecting blood and urine samples. This type of EI can show us current and sometimes past ways you may have been exposed to a contaminant in the environment. • **Environmental testing** includes collecting soil, water, or air samples. This type of EI can help us understand if you could be exposed to contaminants in places where you live, spend time, or play.

You can learn more and get up-to-date information about current exposure investigations by visiting our website at www.doh.wa.gov/consults or calling 1-877-485-7316.