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# Researchers Hope to Conduct Medical Tests on Black Leaf Residents

By [ERICA PETERSON](#) (/PEOPLE/ERICA-PETERSON)

Researchers at the University of Louisville are seeking funding to conduct medical tests on people living near the former Black Leaf Chemical Plant. They held a public meeting this evening to judge interest in the project, and about 20 neighborhood residents attended.



<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wfpl/files/201308/photo%281%29.JPG>

The [Black Leaf site](#)

[http://www.epaosc.org/site/site\\_profile.aspx?site\\_id=7247](http://www.epaosc.org/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=7247)) in Louisville's Park Hill

neighborhood was home to pesticide manufacturing plants and other industries for decades. The soil on the site

is contaminated, and [last year soil testing in nearby private yards](#)

<http://archives.wfpl.org/2012/02/15/epa-begins-soil-sampling-of-black-leaf-chemical-neighbors/>

revealed high levels of heavy metals and pesticides.

The state and federal government are remediating the contaminated properties, but Dr. Matthew Cave wants to know whether the toxins have affected the health of the residents, both before and after remediation. He says the testing's objectives are two-fold.

"We want to provide feedback to residents who live near the Black Leaf site to allow them to know what their levels of certain pollutants are. So that's kind of a patient care issue," he said. "And secondly we want to analyze it from a research perspective to see if people in the area do have higher levels as a group."

Soil testing has only been conducted on homes that are directly adjacent to the plant, but Cave is opening up his study to people who live within four blocks.

Cave already has \$5,000 in funding from the University of Louisville and Councilman David James's office. That's enough to test 100 people for high levels of lead and arsenic.

Right now, Cave is hoping to collect blood, urine and hair samples from neighborhood residents. Some of the blood and urine will be analyzed for lead and arsenic, but some will be frozen. If he gets the funding, Cave plans to use the materials to study levels of pesticides and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in residents. Those tests are about \$300 each per person, so he'll need additional funding.

<http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wfpl/files/201308/photo%281%29.JPG>  
Credit Erica Peterson / WFPL  
Residents at the meeting at the California Community Center

If that funding comes through, Cave says it also opens up the possibility of studying people's levels over time, both before and after remediation.

"Hopefully levels aren't high, but hopefully if they are they'll come down over time," he said. "It seems like a simple concept, but I'm not sure that's ever been demonstrated in Kentucky. I don't think it has."

This first round of testing will be held on Saturday from 7a.m. to 1p.m. and Monday from 7a.m. to 4p.m. at 401 E. Chestnut Street, though additional times might be added if not enough people participate. For more information, call 502-852-8928.

TAGS: [smokestack \(/term/smokestack\)](#) [Black Leaf Chemical \(/term/black-leaf-chemical\)](#)

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