

Information on Arsenic Found at Swann Park

WHAT IS ARSENIC?

Arsenic is an element that occurs naturally in rocks and soil.

WHAT WAS FOUND AT SWANN PARK?

Swann Park is located next to a site where arsenic was used in the manufacture of chemicals for many years. A task force that included federal, state, and city health officials permitted the park to open in the mid-1970s. Additional testing conducted this month found elevated levels of arsenic in the soil. These levels raise a potential concern for human health.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ARSENIC EXPOSURE?

It is unlikely that use of Swann Park could cause acute (immediate) arsenic poisoning. Observable symptoms or effects of acute arsenic poisoning would include:

- ▶ Stomach pain
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Diarrhea

With long-term exposure, inorganic arsenic has been associated with numbness, skin changes and various forms of cancer. The level of risk to health depends on the type of arsenic, the length of exposure, and other chemical and environmental factors.

What is being done at Swann Park?

At the request of the Baltimore City Health Department, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry will conduct an assessment of the risk to human health of arsenic at Swann Park. The assessment of Swann Park should be completed within several weeks. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry will advise on the level of risk to health, recommendations for access to the park, and recommendations for human health surveillance. These recommendations are expected within several weeks.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

More information about arsenic is available at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts2.pdf>. City residents with health concerns about exposure to soil at Swann Park should contact their primary care provider.

City residents with questions about Swann Park should call 311. Questions on activities at the park will be directed to the Parks and Recreation Department. Questions on health will be directed to the Health Department.