

Sewage sludge, also called biosolids, is spread on farmland, public park, gardens, playgrounds and golf courses throughout the US. You and your family's health, land, water, and food may be at risk.

A. What is sewage sludge?

We ALL create sewage sludge.

Anything flushed down the toilet or dumped down the drain in homes,



schools, businesses, and industries flows through the sewer system to sewage treatment plants.

The treatment plants clean the water and remove dangerous materials, including:

- chemicals,
- metals (such as arsenic, mercury, and lead),
- viruses and bacteria.

The water is recycled, and the solid materials become "sewage sludge".

B. Why is sludge spread on land?

Raw sewage sludge used to be dumped into the ocean. In 1988, ocean dumping was banned because it was polluting coastal waters. Since then, treated sewage sludge has been spread on farmland as fertilizer because it has nutrients that help crops grow.

C. Why are some scientists and citizens concerned about sewage sludge spread on land?

The chemicals, metals, and germs in sludge can get into our food, water, soil, and air and may therefore harm both human health and the environment.



Putting our health at risk?

Some people who live near fields where sludge is spread have reported health problems.

Symptoms include:

- burning eyes, nose, and throat,
- coughing, chest tightness, breathing problems,
- hoarseness, stuffy nose,
- headaches, fever,
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and
- skin infections.

These symptoms may last for a short time. However, children, the elderly, and people with on-going health problems may have symptoms for much longer.

D. Is Sewage Sludge Regulated?

In 1993, rules were passed to control some harmful materials in sludge. However, the rules do not regulate many of the heavy metals, germs, and toxic chemicals that are spread on our fields.

E. What can YOU do?

Citizens, scientists, and politicians are working together to understand how sludge affects our health.



Please contact the organization listed on the back of this brochure to:

- Get more information on sludge,
- Find out where sludge may be spread in your community, and/or
- Join other concerned citizens and researchers working together to understand how sludge affects our health.

What do we know about sewage sludge?

- Sewage sludge, also called biosolids, is spread on farmland as fertilizer.
- Little is known about how spreading sewage sludge might affect human health.
- Hundreds of people around the country say that sewage sludge has made them sick.
- Odors are a common complaint about sewage sludge, yet little is known about how the odors might affect human health.
- There is no system to track and investigate complaints about spreading sewage sludge.
- There are not enough resources and staff to regulate what is in sewage sludge and how it is spread on farmland.
- Methods for learning about the risk of chemicals and germs in sewage sludge are out of date.

Learn More About Sewage Sludge

To learn more about sludge please contact the organization listed below.

United Sludge-Free Alliance
610-823-8258
www.usludgefree.org



Spreading the Word about Spreading Sludge

