

Cancer alert sounded in Massachusetts

April 26 2006

Residents of Ashland, Mass., are being urged to consult a physician about cancer risks if they swam or waded in water near a hazardous waste site before 1985.

The warning is based on a seven-year state study released Tuesday indicating residents of the Boston suburb who came into contact with ponds and brooks contaminated by the former Nyanza Inc. chemical and dye factory 20 to 40 years ago face a risk of developing cancer two to three times greater than normal, The Boston Globe reported.

The dye plant in Ashland closed in 1978, but its sprawling grounds remained open to the public until about 1985, the Globe said, noting the area had been long used by students from nearby middle and high schools as a shortcut to reach a bus stop.

Occasionally after football games, some youngsters would take a celebratory dip in wastewater lagoons, state health officials told the newspaper, while other children waded and swam in polluted ponds and wetlands that were the color of whatever dye was being manufactured that day.

One waterway was even named Chemical Brook.

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