

# Monsanto faces first US trial over Roundup cancer link

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A former groundskeeper who contracted terminal cancer after years of working with Roundup, a popular herbicide which Monsanto claims to be safe, is suing the chemical giant

In the first trial of its kind, a Californian dying of cancer is suing US

agrochemical giant Monsanto, claiming its popular herbicide Roundup caused his disease—a case that could have sweeping ramifications.

The stakes are high for Monsanto, which could face massive losses should it have to pay out damages over the product, whose main ingredient is glyphosate, a substance which some say is dangerously carcinogenic.

Dewayne Johnson, a 46-year-old father of two, says he is sick because of contact with Roundup, which he used for two years from 2012 as a groundskeeper for the Benicia school district near San Francisco, his lawyer Timothy Litzenburg told AFP.

Thousands of lawsuits targeting Monsanto are currently proceeding through the US court system, according to American media.

Litzenburg says he represents hundreds of people who also say they are victims of glyphosate.

Whether the substance causes cancer has been the source of endless debate among government regulators, health experts and lawyers.

"A major part of that job was spraying Roundup or Ranger Pro (a similar Monsanto product)... He sprayed it 20 to 40 times per year, sometimes hundreds of gallons at a time on the school properties," Litzenburg said.

In 2014, Johnson was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a cancer that affects [white blood cells](#). Two years later, and no longer able to work, he filed suit against Monsanto, which he accuses of hiding its product's dangers.

"His case has been expedited because he currently has only a few months

to live," his lawyer said.

On Monday, US television footage showed Johnson in court for pre-trial proceedings, visibly weakened and his skin marked by numerous lesions.

Opening arguments in the case are expected to begin in the middle of next week, after a series of technical hearings and jury selection, according to both parties interviewed by AFP.

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