

# Study finds Lausanne toxic soil did not worsen health

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Soil pollution from an old incinerator in the Swiss city of Lausanne has not resulted in increased health risks to the local population, a study concluded Wednesday.

A waste incineration plant in Switzerland's fourth-biggest city—closed in 2005—was blamed for traces of dioxin uncovered in 2021.

Dioxins, which belong to the so-called 'dirty dozen' of chemicals known as [persistent organic pollutants](#), have the potential to be highly toxic to several organs and systems.

But a study found that people who had been exposed had similar levels of dioxins in the blood as the rest of the population or in other European countries.

"Data analysis did not reveal any significant differences between the exposed group, i.e. consuming food from contaminated soil, and the control group," the Vaud regional authority said in a statement.

The Vallon plant opened in 1958 and was initially welcomed as a way of dealing with the city's garbage.

The [dioxin](#) pollution dates from before 1982, when the filters were upgraded.

After the problem was discovered, the Vaud cantonal authorities issued recommendations to restrict the consumption of eggs, vegetables and fruit from the affected areas.

## **Concentric rings of pollution**

The problem was discovered by sheer chance in 2021, causing shock in wealthy Switzerland, which prides itself on its pristine mountains, lakes and pastures.

For years, pollution monitoring had focused on air and water; dioxins were never previously found because nobody had been looking for them.

Soil tests across the [city](#) showed the affected zone stretched 5.25 kilometres (3.2 miles) inland and measured around 3.6 kilometres across.

The concentric circles of increasing pollution led to only one source.

Following the health study, the Vaud cantonal medical authorities said the public health recommendations in place were sufficient and did not need to be strengthened.

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