



Indiana State Department of Health

How to Report a Suspected Cancer Cluster

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How to Report a Suspected Cancer Cluster

The term cancer cluster is used in several ways, with slightly different meanings. The official definition used by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Cancer Institute, and other public health institutions is “a greater than expected number of cancer cases that occurs within a group of people in a geographic area over a defined period of time.” Until all of these parameters are met, the group of cancer cases is often referred to as a *suspected* cancer cluster.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) takes every report of a suspected cancer cluster seriously. While most suspected cancer concerns do not result in true cancer clusters, each reported cancer inquiry is assessed and investigated through a systematic process as outlined by *Guidelines for the Management of Inquiries Related to Cancer Concerns or Suspected Cancer Clusters in Indiana*.

It is important to become familiar with cancer clusters and how Indiana addresses concerns over suspected cancer clusters. Please take the time to review *Questions and Answers about Suspected Cancer Clusters* found on the ISDH cancer cluster investigation website at www.in.gov/isdh/26882.htm.

Examples of cancer cluster concerns from the public may include:

- There seems to be a large number of people diagnosed with cancer in my neighborhood. Is this a cancer cluster?
- I (or my friend, coworker or family member) was diagnosed with cancer, and I am worried that something in my local community (or workplace) may have caused it.
- I am worried that chemicals from an industrial site, facility, or business in my neighborhood might be causing cancer.

To report a suspected cancer cluster, please *DO* take the following steps:

1. **Contact the ISDH through one of the following ways:**
 - a. Call 317-234-2945
 - b. Email cancer@isdh.in.gov
 - c. Complete an [online contact form](#)
2. **Provide Known Information.** Please be prepared to provide your personal information (name, address, contact information, etc.). In addition, you will be asked questions regarding the specific cancer of concern and/or environmental concern(s). Please know that all information gathered is kept strictly confidential, and will only be used for the purposes of the cancer inquiry.
3. **Maintain Communication.** The ISDH process includes open communication with citizens who initiate the cancer inquiry process in order to keep everyone informed, and to gather additional information as needed.

Please *DO NOT*:

1. Gather personal health information from others unprompted.
2. Share someone’s personal health information without permission.

For more information on suspected cancer cluster investigations in Indiana, or for cancer resources, visit www.in.gov/isdh/26882.htm.