

Monticello cancer review update 2022

There are no significantly elevated cancer rates in Monticello compared with the state of Utah.

San Juan County, March 2022

After review, the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Environmental Epidemiology Program (EEP) concludes:

Cancer rates in Monticello are not higher compared with the rest of Utah for any type of cancer from 1980 to 2019. This fact sheet summarizes results of the 2022 review.

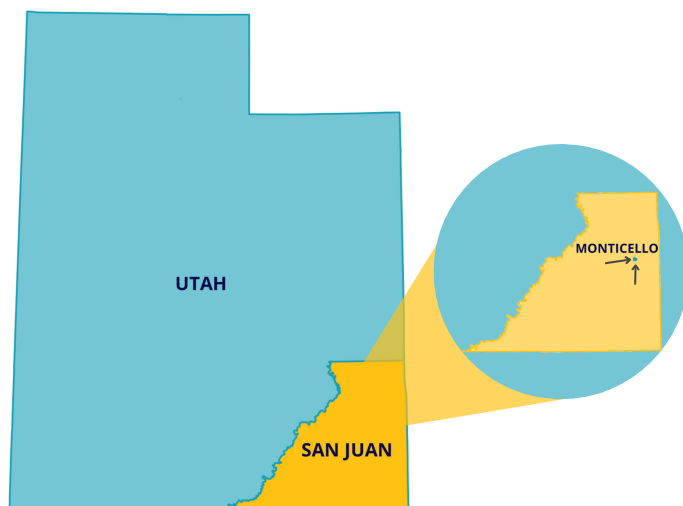
Read the full report at appletree.utah.gov/monticello-mill-seep-6

Why did the EEP conduct a statistical cancer review for Monticello?

From 1942 to 1960, a uranium and vanadium mill operated near Monticello. Mill waste contaminated with heavy metals and radioactive materials was dumped at the Monticello mill tailings site (MMTS). Contaminated materials from the MMTS traveled into Monticello.

Mill wastes were removed from MMTS and the community; however, Monticello residents were exposed to contaminants before the clean-up occurred.

Potential health effects from exposure to these contaminated materials include certain types of cancer. The initial public health assessment in 1997 recommended scheduled follow-up studies because it can take many years after exposure for certain cancers to develop. The current study is a follow-up of the 2012 study and is the fourth cancer study conducted since 1997.



What did the report find?

This study found no significantly elevated cancer rates in Monticello compared with rates in the state of Utah for any type of cancer from 1980 to 2019. All types of cancer were investigated.

Utah APPLETREE assesses health risks at contaminated sites by evaluating environmental data. We collect community input and make recommendations on how to protect public health based on this information. APPLETREE is a program within DHHS EEP.

Why did the EEP recommend that we stop doing 5-year updates?

EEP uses statistical cancer reviews to see whether a cancer cluster is present in a community and if more investigation is needed. This report is the fourth cancer study conducted since 1997 and is an update to the 2012 study. After a review of 40 years of data, EEP found cancer rates in Monticello are not higher than expected when compared with rates in the rest of the state. Based on these results, we recommend EEP end our 5-year review updates. If you suspect a cancer cluster is occurring in your community, contact your local health department.

What are the limitations of this study?

This study can't link cancer cases in Monticello to any specific factors, including environmental contaminants. In other words, the results of this study can't say contaminants from the Monticello mill caused cancer in residents (or vice versa). Although this study method cannot account for every possible circumstance, it provides a way to determine if Monticello residents experience more cancer than expected compared with rates in the rest of Utah.

Where can I find out more information about Monticello and the mill?

Visit the Monticello mill webpage at appletree.utah.gov/monticello-mill-seep-6

Scan the QR codes for information from the following organizations:

American Cancer Society



Intermountain Healthcare Cancer Services



Huntsman Cancer Institute



Questions? Please contact us.

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About Monticello

Monticello is a small town located in southeastern Utah. It has a population of more than 2,500 people and is the second most populous city within San Juan County. Monticello is located on the Colorado Plateau at over 7,000 feet in elevation.

