

CANCER DISPARITIES IN LOUISIANA



Certain groups of people are more affected by cancer than other groups of people. This is known as a cancer disparity.

Louisianians have a:
8% higher cancer incidence,
15% higher cancer death rate
and

Black Louisianians have a:
12% higher cancer incidence,
35% higher cancer death rate

compared to Americans overall,
based on 2011-2015 data from
the National Cancer Institute.¹

Many factors can contribute to cancer disparities, including differences in lifestyle, genetics, environmental factors, and access to health care².

INFORMATION SOURCES

¹National Cancer Institute, State Cancer Profiles. Age-adjusted mortality rates for 2011-2015. <https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov>

Cancer mortality*: U.S., all races (163.5); Louisiana, all races (187.8); Louisiana, black (220.5). Cancer incidence*: U.S., all races (441.2); Louisiana, all races (475.9), Louisiana black (493.4).

*Rates are per 100,000 people/yr.

²National Cancer Institute. Cancer Disparities. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/understanding/disparities> Accessed 16 May 2019.

³Maniscalco L, French J, Rosales C, et al. (eds). Cancer in Louisiana, 2011-2015. p. 9. New Orleans: Louisiana Tumor Registry, 2018.

⁴Maniscalco, L, Zhang L, Yi Y, et al. (eds). Cancer Incidence in Louisiana by Census Tract, 2005-2015. New Orleans: Louisiana Tumor Registry, 2019.

⁵National Air Toxics Assessment. (2019) NATA map (2014 dataset, released 2018). Retrieved Apr 25, 2019. <https://gispub.epa.gov/NATA/>

⁶United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2019). TRI Explorer (2017 Updated Dataset (released April 2019)) [Internet database]. Retrieved Apr 25, 2019. <https://www.epa.gov/triexplorer>.

⁷National Institutes of Health. Cancer and the Environment. (2003) pp. 4, 11-17. https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/materials/cancer_and_the_environment_508.pdf

UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES

AND CANCER DISPARITIES IN LOUISIANA



A POCKET GUIDE FOR CONCERNED RESIDENTS

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Community Outreach Program

TIPS FOR TALKING ABOUT CANCER STUDIES

1. KNOW these key terms:

RISK = the chance of getting cancer

INCIDENCE = the number of new cancer cases per year

2. REMEMBER that the causes of cancer can only be understood through scientific studies.

If a specific place or thing isn't known to cause cancer, but hasn't been thoroughly studied, we can't say that it doesn't cause cancer.

3. ASK QUESTIONS to understand the strengths and limitations of cancer studies.

- What did this study test?
- How did this study account for other factors that affect cancer rates?
- What were the limitations of this study?

Tumore Registry Reports are NOT Scientific Studies

The **Louisiana Tumor Registry (LTR)** collects and monitors cancer data on Louisiana residents. **LTR Reports do not investigate possible causes of cancer.** Instead, they provide basic data that can be used for education or scientific studies by public health professionals.³

Scientific studies can test whether something causes cancer, while accounting for other things that also cause cancer.

LTR data show higher cancer rates in some parts and lower rates in other parts of “Cancer Alley” compared to the state average.⁴

LTR Reports **DO NOT**:

- Evaluate the health effects of living near industrial facilities
- Report cancer risk
In Louisiana, cancer risk from air pollution is highest in “Cancer Alley”.⁵
- Account for many factors that affect cancer rates
(for example, occupation, residential history, smoking, & pollution exposure).

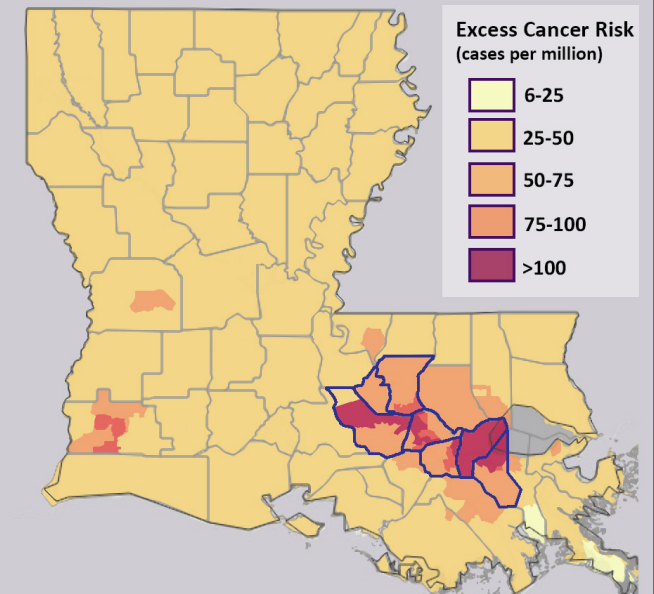
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES

Louisiana is one of the most polluted states in the U.S.⁶ Our industries release **>20 million pounds of cancer-causing pollution** each year.⁶

Any exposure to cancer-causing pollution will increase a person's cancer risk.⁷

Most parishes in Louisiana have at least one industrial facility that releases cancer-causing pollution.⁸ But pollution levels are highest in “Cancer Alley”. Scientific studies are needed to understand the health effects of living near Louisiana's industrial facilities.

Cancer Risk from Toxic Air Pollution⁵



Bold outline indicates “Cancer Alley” parishes.