

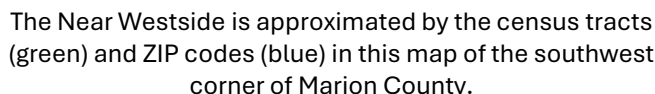
A horizontal double-headed arrow with a thick purple line and arrowheads at both ends.

The Reilly Tar & Chemical site, located at 1500 South Tibbs Avenue, closed after decades of pollution concerns. The plant has a history of contaminating groundwater and emitting harmful chemicals like benzene, pyridines, and ammonia. Although cleanup efforts have been made over the years, including removing contaminated soil and groundwater, concerns about long-term health impacts remain. An agreement has been reached for the plant's owners to take responsibility for the cleanup, but residents in the area are concerned about the lengthy process and the ongoing risks to health and safety.¹

In response to community interest, the EPA asked the Marion County Public Health Department (MCPHD) to conduct a health impact assessment (HIA) on the former Reilly Tar & Chemical site. A HIA looks into how a program, project, policy, or plan impacts a community's overall health.² The information provided in this document highlights the findings from MCPHD's assessment.

Exposure to these chemicals over a long period of time is associated with an increased risk of developing these health issues: ^{3, 4, 5}

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Asthma
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Emphysema
- Leukemia
- Lung Cancer
- Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias



Demographic data helps us better understand the people who live in a community and the challenges they may face.⁶ Many general population characteristics are similar between the Near Westside area, all of Marion County, and Indiana. While predominantly White non-Latino, a larger proportion of Latino Americans live in the Near Westside area (15.19%) compared to Marion County (11.34%) and Indiana (7.69%).⁷



More than one-half (53.5%) of Near Westside residents have a household income lower than \$50,000 compared to 42.5% of Marion County residents and 37.3% of all Indiana residents.⁷

Questions? Contact
epidemiology@marionhealth.org

Key Findings

The Near Westside area has **higher** rates of disease than Marion County and/or Indiana for these conditions

COPD-related
emergency room visits
(2012-2023)

Lung cancer
hospitalizations
(2012-2021)

Lung cancer mortality
(2013-2022)

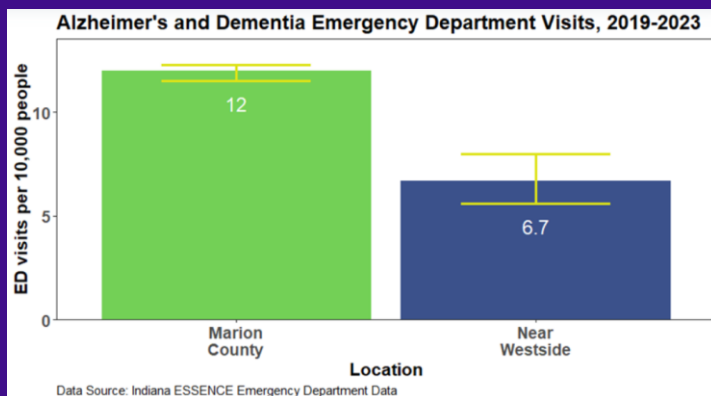
Deaths related to
respiratory conditions
(2013-2022)

Lung cancer
diagnoses
(2016-2022)

The Near Westside area has **lower** rates of disease than Marion County and/or Indiana for these conditions

Asthma-related emergency
room visits
(2019-2023)

Alzheimer's and dementia
related emergency room
visits (2019-2023)



The Near Westside shows a lower rate of Alzheimer's and dementia emergency room visits than that of Marion County.

Sources

1. Saenz E. A West Indy chemical plant is shutting down, and neighbors worry about the cleanup. Mirror Indy. Published March 4, 2024. <https://mirrorindy.org/west-indianapolis-chemical-plant-closing-epa-vertellus-aurorium>
2. Health Impact Assessments. United States Environmental Protection Agency <https://www.epa.gov/healthresearch/health-impact-assessments>
3. Toxicological Profile for Ammonia. United States Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Published September 3, 2004. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK598714/>
4. Toxicological Profile for Benzene. United States Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Published August 3, 2004. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK591289/>
5. Toxicological Profile for Pyridines. United States Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Published September 2, 1992. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK595534/>
6. Veroff, D. What You Can Learn About Your Community from Demographics. University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension. <https://leadershipdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu/articles/what-you-can-learn-about-your-community-from-demographics/#:~:text=Perhaps%20surprisingly%2C%20demographic%20data%20can,age%2C%20gender%2C%20race%2Fethnicity>
7. Hernandez JBR, Kim PY. Epidemiology Morbidity And Mortality. In: StatPearls. StatPearls Publishing; 2024. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK547668/>

Caution should be used when interpreting the implication of these rates as there may be confounding factors that contribute to the findings.